HARE'S ETHICAL SUBJECTIVISM
By H. J. McCloskey

In this paper I shall be concerned to consider how the main traditional objections to subjectivism tell against one of the more notable of the various contemporary varieties of ethical subjectivism, namely that developed by R. M. Hare in *The Language of Morals*.[1] At the same time, I shall seek to show how attempts to circumvent these traditional objections not only fail, but also lead to new, equally serious difficulties.

Traditionally the main criticisms of subjectivism relate to the apparent inability of a subjectivist to give adequate accounts of the justification of moral judgements and moral principles; of disagreements in morals; of the truth or falsity of moral judgements and principles; of personal deliberation and perplexity and inter-personal guidance, advice, instruction and exhortation; and of the reality, authority, and autonomy of morality. Subjectivist theories seem to imply that ethical judgements and principles cannot really be given an ultimate rational justification; that the most typically moral disagreements are not real clashes of logically contradictory propositions; that ethical judgements cannot properly be said to be true or false — unless they are explained as autobiographical reports; that personal deliberation and perplexity, and inter-personal advice, are not what they appear to be; and that there are no rational grounds, or at the most comparatively weak grounds, for attributing to morality the authority we commonly attribute to it. This account of morality, which detracts so much from the

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[1] The term 'ethical subjectivist' is here used in the conventional sense to refer to theories of the type which make moral expressions basically dependent on the thoughts, feelings, attitudes or wishes of moral agents, and which accordingly proceed to explain moral judgements as disguised statements or expressions of feelings, exclamations, or as commands or imperatives or the like, and of which the theories of Carnap, Ayer, Stevenson, Hare and Nowell-Smith are instances. Although Hare, and apparently also Nowell-Smith, decline the title, there is no real impropriety in describing them in this way.

An acute exposition of most of the traditional objections referred to here is given by A. C. Ewing in *The Definition of Good*, Ch. 1.

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authority of morality, seems at the same time to reveal the ethical subjectivist — who in other spheres is often modest and even humble — as a man of great arrogance, in persisting in trying to impose his 'moral judgements' on others, after he, as a subjectivist, has grasped their true import. The subjectivist analysis, again, is commonly criticised because it fails to provide an adequate basis in terms of which the moral and the non-moral, for instance morals, manners, tastes, etc., may be discriminated. And it makes puzzling the use of such expressions in ordinary discourse as 'knowing', 'believing', 'judging', 'seeing', 'recognizing' something or other to be good, or to be obligatory. So too, immorality, its nature and its possibility, may create difficulties for some varieties of subjectivism, as may the specifically moral feelings of moral indignation, guilt and remorse.

The fundamental difficulties seem to be those relating to the possibility of rational justification of moral judgements and principles, to the nature of moral disagreements, and to personal perplexity and inter-personal advice. The other difficulties either follow from these or arise from the same features of subjectivist analyses as give rise to these basic difficulties. It is to these difficulties that first Stevenson, then Hare, and more recently Nowell-Smith, have directed much of their attention; but in spite of their various modifications and qualifications of their subjectivist themes, they do not appear to have been successful in satisfactorily meeting them. This is now generally conceded in respect of Stevenson's variety of ethical subjectivism. Let us now, then, consider whether it is true, as has been claimed, that these traditional objections to ethical subjectivism are fatal to Hare's theory.

Hare, in introducing his book, *The Language of Morals,* explains that it has arisen out of his dissatisfaction with previous subjectivist theories — particularly that of Stevenson — as accounts of the rationality of morals. However, this introductory explanation builds up expectations not subsequently fulfilled. Hare does not set out a clear and detailed theory; nor does he offer a more convincing account of the rationality of morality than does Stevenson. In brief, Hare gives the impression of providing material from which an interesting, if more ingenious than plausible, moral theory may be constructed, rather than of having actually constructed a finished product. He spends a lot of time explaining his prescriptive theory of the logic of moral terms in terms of non-moral prescriptions. And towards the end of the book he seems to mean to assert much less than at the outset when he claims that moral expressions are

primarily self-embracing, universal prescriptions. His book gives the air of great logical rigour; yet when we extract and examine the theory it contains, we find that it provides no stronger a basis for ethical subjectivism than does Stevenson's analysis — rather, if anything, a weaker basis. And the one contribution of value, that concerning the universality of moral principles, is taken from Kant and incompletely worked out and made to do too much by Hare, but later used with more understanding and insight by Nowell-Smith.[2]

Hare's basic distinction is that between prescription and description. This springs from his concentration on what it is now fashionable to call 'ought'-sentences; and this concentration in turn springs from his view of morality as essentially concerned with action. Moral judgements are thus represented as a special kind of answer to questions of the form: 'What shall I do?'. All answers to such questions are said necessarily to be commands, and, in the case of moral answers, they are said to be commands derived from universal, self-inclusive, self-committing prescriptions.

Hare says comparatively little about the logic of these universal prescriptions. His account of the logic of prescriptive language centres largely around imperatives, the non-normative species of the genus prescriptive language. The key to his discussion here is his distinction between the *neustic* and *phrastic* elements in the meaning of imperatives, and the contention that imperatives have a logic like that of indicatives, and hence admit of rational support.

If we follow the clues given in the analysis of the imperative, 'Shut the door', it would seem that the principle of utility should be analysed as: 'Everyone, past, future and present, is happy, please.' And the principle relating to cruelty to animals would be elucidated as: 'Everyone, past, present and future, will refrain from cruelty to animals, please.' (The word 'please' is what Hare calls the 'neustic' element, and the rest of the analysis is what he calls the 'phrastic' element of these universal prescriptions.)

This may look as if it is a parody of Hare's theory. It is not. These analyses are what follow most obviously from Hare's analyses of imperatives. In any case, that this is the correct

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[2] In spite of its greater subtlety and insight, Nowell-Smith's discussion of the distinguishing marks of a moral principle is by no means satisfactory. It is not possible to show this here; and, in any case, it is sufficient for our present purpose to observe Nowell-Smith's awareness of the need for a more subtle discussion than that which appears to have satisfied Hare.

interpretation becomes more evident when the rest of Hare's account of morality is considered.

Morality is explained in terms of decisions. A moral decision about a particular matter, culminating in the statement, 'I ought', or 'You ought', represents the adoption of a universal principle. And the decision of principle is the formulation of a prescription for all others, at the same time as committing oneself. Thus if the imperative model is at all illuminating, as Hare presumably thinks it to be since he devotes so much space to it, then it follows that these self-committing universal prescriptions, which underlie or comprise the whole of a moral decision, must be analysed more or less along the lines of the example given, 'Shut the door'. Thus, to take Hare's example — No Smoking in Railway Carriages — his model of an analysis of a moral prescription would seem to be: 'No one is ever going to smoke in any railway compartment anywhere, please'. This is a universal imperative which Hare thinks no one would ever have occasion to lay down; but it would seem to be one which, in terms of his analysis, would become a moral principle, if it were laid down as a self-committing universal prescription.

The point of the analysis of imperatives is to reveal the logical form of prescriptions and to show thereby how and in what ways imperatives and prescriptions generally are subject to logical rules, may enter into inferences, admit of rational support, and genuinely contradict one another.

If imperatives are governed by logical rules, if they may be genuinely contradictory, and if they may be supported by reasons, some of the sting is taken out of the traditional objections that subjectivism does not account for and explain the apparent genuineness of moral disagreements, and that it does not explain the possibility of rational argument in morals. However, the whole force of these general objections is not lost, unless it is shown that decisions of an ultimate character are not mere capricious, arbitrary decisions, nor even decisions of a non-rational character, i.e., that moral reasoning at all levels can be explained on the model of reasons relevant to imperatives.

It is here that we come to the crux of Hare's theory. Decisions of an ultimate character, once all the facts have been accumulated, are said simply to be up to the person — whatever that could conceivably mean. The individual is said to be moral just so long as he makes this moral-type, self-committing, universal prescription and then obeys it; or alternatively, apparently, he is not immoral, provided he does not make a decision of this character, and hence is not in a position to disobey anything.

Which decision, which universal principle of action the individual makes, may affect us, and be such that we cannot remain indifferent to it, because we have to live in the same world; but we cannot say that it is wrong or incorrect, nor even that it is immoral, except as a means of recommending, in a round-about way, our own universal prescriptions.

It is this apparent moral indifference to the question of which decision of principle a man reaches which has led to Hare's being linked with existentialists such as Sartre, and this, in turn, has led to the condemnation of his theory as being therefore unsuccessful as a demonstration of the rationality of morality in terms of a subjectivist analysis. However, Hare's analysis does not bring him quite as close to existentialist ethics as is commonly supposed. Hare himself does seem to believe that it is better to make these decisions of universal principle than not to make them, but this is not an implication of his analysis. Hare's analysis implies simply that you enter the sphere of morality by making decisions of universal prin-ciples, that you are non-moral, or outside the sphere of morality, in so far as you do not make such universally prescriptive decisions, and that you are immoral only in so far as you dis-obey your self-imposed, universal prescriptions. It carries no implication that we ought to make such decisions.

However there is, none the less, point in drawing the parallel with existentialism, in that, on Hare's analysis, morality, for the individual deciding on a course of conduct, consists not in adopting the right or moral way of life — there is and can be no such thing, according to Hare, before the decision, if the decision relates to ultimates — but simply in self-committal to one of these universal prescriptions. Provided he has committed himself, the individual is right and cannot ever be shown or ever himself discover that he was wrong; and his conscience can remain completely clear, On this view there can be no personal wickedness in choosing the wrong ultimate principles, and no personal immorality in not adopting a principle, such as the principle of utility or truth-telling or abstinence from cruelty; nor even in not adopting a universal principle of action in, say, a whole area of our life, where others might think it essential — e.g. in our treatment of animals, or in sexual behaviour. We may of course find it difficult not to adopt universal principles — Hare seems to think that quite a number are unavoidable — and we may meet with condemnation from others for various of our decisions; and we ourselves may come to adopt other ultimate principles; but if we at the time of

our decisions are sincere in our self-committal to a universal prescription, we cannot, in terms of Hare's analysis, fear that we may have adopted an immoral principle. And when we are hovering between two alternative prescriptions to lay down for ourselves — of altruism or egoism — *we cannot be thought of as wavering between the moral and the immoral, for neither becomes the moral or the immoral for us, on Hare's analysis, until the decision has been made.* And then immorality would seem to consist in failing to live up to the principles to which we have committed ourselves, and prescribed for others. These implications and aspects of Hare's analysis emerge very clearly from the discussion of ultimates on pages 69-70 of *The Language of Morals.*

Critical Appraisal :

Let us now consider the soundness of this theory, and in particular whether, in terms of it, Hare is able to make good his claims to have made a significant advance on previous subjectivist theories. As has been noted, the difficulties of these earlier theories — Stevenson's and its predecessors — relate on the one hand to the problems of marking off the moral from the non-moral, and on the other to the claims of moral judgements and discourse to be regarded as rational, as true or false, as possessed of authority, and as being generically different from discourse concerning tastes, customs or law. A brief consideration of Hare's analysis, in the light of these difficulties, makes it immediately apparent that Hare's analysis is a very questionable advance on its predecessors. It succeeds in meeting some traditional difficulties only by becoming more seriously exposed to other traditional objections, and by encountering in addition special new difficulties peculiar to itself. To consider first the three main objections that relate peculiarly to Hare's theory, and then how the main traditional objections apply:

1. It is *prima facie* unplausible that moral judgements and principles are prescriptions. By the end of his book, Hare waters down what he means to assert by this claim, but it remains true that moral judgements such as 'It is wrong not to repay your debt to Smith' and moral principles such as 'It is right and obligatory that wives should obey their husbands' are more like statements than prescriptions, although in certain respects distinct from both. Stevenson's analysis had the very real merit of being a product of an attempt to take note of both features of moral expressions. Hare, on the other hand, seems just arbitrarily to reject the propositional characteristics of

ethical judgements as misleading, or as adequately accounted
for in terms of the phrastic element of imperatives. Yet moral
expressions are much more like statements than are imperatives.

This prescriptive analysis is completely inappropriate and
irrelevant to ethics. But, even if it were not inappropriate,
Hare's account of the logical structure of imperatives in parti-
cular, and of prescriptions in general, would have to be rejected
as unsatisfactory. Quite apart from making it appear that,
when we think imperatives in terms of their logical form, we
think as some nervous, halting foreigners speak — You are going
to shut the door, please — (and this is ludicrous enough even
in a long tradition of ludicrous logical reductions and analyses),
it is unsatisfactory because incomplete and non-explanatory. The
account of the logical function of 'please' is needed to complete
the explanation, but this is nowhere given.

Again, if this sort of analysis were to be accepted, it
would need at least some sort of development of the kind
suggested by Braithwaite, in terms of distinguishing many more
neustics than simply 'yes' and 'please'. Braithwaite suggests
that this sort of modification would lead to an account of moral
expressions as resolutions and subscriptions, rather than as
prescriptions.[3]

Thus Hare's analysis of imperatives is defective because too
crude, and because incomplete, and, more importantly, because
it is inappropriate or irrelevant to ethics. The importance of
this criticism lies in the fact that Hare's analysis of imperatives
is basic to his claim to be able to show morality to be rational.

2. It is commonly argued that Hare's theory is both funda-
mentally inconsistent and incomplete. Hare bases his prescrip-
tive analysis on three claims — (a) that moral judgements are
answers to the question, What shall I do?; (b) that the answer
to this question must be a command; and (c) that prescriptions
can be deduced only from prescriptions. Yet, in the celebrated
passage on decisions of principle, as well as in many other
places — e.g. in his discussion of changing societies, and in his
'sermon' on educating one's children — he talks about these
universal prescriptions as being *based upon* certain facts, and
as being *suitable* or *unsuitable* to certain facts. That is to say,
Hare, in defending his theory, moves from 'is' to 'ought', or,
in his terminology, from indicative to prescriptive. This is not
an accidental lapse, but one made necessary by his attempt to
explain ultimate decisions.

[3] Critical Notice: Hare—*Language of Morals*: Mind, 1954.

Lurking behind much of Hare's talk — talk about *basing* prescriptions on the facts, of *verifying* our decisions of principle, and of reaching *important* conclusions in decisions of principle, and the like — is a theory about *the reason* for these universal prescriptions. It is, I suspect, a theory about natural pro-attitudes, for that would explain why Hare is so confident we will all become involved in the game of morality; but the theory, whatever it be, is not made explicit, and, until it is, the theory, whilst being directed at explaining the logic of moral expressions, is seriously incomplete as an account of the purpose and use of moral expression.

3. Hare's whole analysis proceeds from the view that moral principles are special types of decisions of principle. However, if we compare a paradigm case of a decision of principle with moral deliberation culminating in the acceptance of a moral principle such as the primary precept of the natural law, we find that there is a very considerable difference. A decision of principle might be that of an inaccurate full-forward deciding always to look at the ball and not at the goal when kicking for goal. We can imagine how he might come to adopt this principle — that he is distracted by the crowd and by the man on his mark, made uncertain by being over-conscious of aiming at goal, etc. This is not at all like suddenly discovering that the Angelic Doctor was right after all, that we should: Follow Nature!

To consider now how Hare's account fares in respect to the more general, traditional objections to ethical subjectivism:

4. Clashes of ultimates are clashes within morality, such that which resolution is arrived at is not morally indifferent. They are moral clashes. To explain: Recently I had reported to me a conversation between two apparent murderers, the conversation occurring in a bar known to be patronised by Melbourne's underworld. One man expressed dislike of killing men with wives and children, and even had some scruples about it. The other man brushed these scruples and feelings of dis-taste aside, observing that if such killing was for money then it was all right, whether the victim had dependants or not. Consider a conflict between these men, and between each of them and an ordinary person. Should we consider that it was morally indifferent how such a three-cornered disagreement was settled? My point here becomes clearer if we consider a fourth person, in doubt about the rights and wrongs of the conflicting attitudes. He wants to reach the *right* decision, and not simply to be brought to *a* decision.

Clashes about ultimates are moral clashes. As our example brings out, this is most apparent when we consider genuine personal moral deliberation or perplexity. The individual who is genuinely perplexed about moral ultimates — as an onlooker might be in the example just cited, or as so many are in modern society, when faced by the clash of justice and happiness on the one hand against advancing culture on the other — wishes to reach the morally right conclusion. Hare fails to explain such facts; and in failing at this point his theory fails to explain moral disagreements at the point at which they are most characteristically moral.

On Hare's view, there is no morally right or wrong principle for the perplexed person to discover. The principle only becomes right by being adopted and prescribed. Similarly, whilst the objectivist must admit that there may be clashes concerning ultimates such that no further reasoning becomes possible, there is none the less a fundamental difference between his position and that of Hare, and, on this issue, his would seem to be the characteristically moral position. When a disagreement concerns ultimates, and is such that further reasoning is impossible, the resolution of the disagreement does not suddenly become morally indifferent, and certainly not just on this account. It is not a matter of individual whim which decision is to be reached. The disagreement remains a moral one in the sense that which solution is reached is not morally indifferent. Hare, on the other hand, explains it as one which is morally indifferent, and implies that a decision or resolution is equally moral and equally reasonable, whichever way it goes. And it would seem to follow from his analysis that if we reach such ultimate conflicts, and are in full possession of the facts, it is a morally sound way of overcoming our perplexity to toss a coin, or, if we can avoid a decision of universal principle, then perhaps to do that instead. Clearly, in arguing in this way, Hare, in terms of his analysis, takes away all reason for attributing *authority* to morality, the more so as we are said to be the creators of our own universal principles.

It would seem therefore that Hare fails to explain the rationality of morality at the most important points in morality. In failing in this, he at the same time fails to explain satisfactorily the authority of morality, the nature of and reasons for moral disagreement, and our reasons for persisting in such disagreements.

To explain these latter points. Clashes of ultimates are said to be clashes of universal prescriptions, which cannot both

be obeyed. But why are these contradictory imperatives advanced and persevered with in the light of disagreement? In fact, why are they advanced at all? No theory is complete which fails to answer these questions; yet Hare does not do much by way of attempting to answer them.

Hare's account of why we coerce others — i.e. of why we persist with our moral prescriptions in the face of opposition — is in terms of our having to live with those with whom we disagree. But this is hardly satisfactory. Why should we not bring ourselves into line with others? And why do we not simply agree to differ, as we do in other matters where we do not think uniformity is essential? In sexual morality, and in many other areas in morals, considerable diversity of opinion and practice prevails in the community without serious disharmony or disruption to social life.

The truth of the matter is that Hare's explanation presupposes an independent judgement of importance outside of morality. We persist with our moral disagreements, and not with, or so strongly with, those concerning tastes, manners or conventions, because moral disagreements and moral matters are important and the others less important; and the importance is not to be explained completely in terms of our just feeling strongly about our own prescriptions, for, if that were the whole story, Hare's account might make it rational for us to abandon some or all of our prescriptions to achieve greater harmony. But moral prescriptions are not like that. They are not things we can accept or reject at will, for they seem not be wholly matters of choice, or creations of our own, as Hare's account suggests, but rather they are things forced upon us by the facts.

In the same way, Hare's account gives no grounds for individuals entering into the sphere of morality, i.e., for making these self-committing, universally prescribing decisions. His theory creates a problem which does not arise at the level of ordinary moral expressions, the problem namely of explaining why we should enter into the sphere of morality by using moral discourse. The point of moral expressions is that they seem to carry their own explanation or justification. Moral talk explains why it is engaged in and why it ought to be engaged in. Hare's analysis does not bring this out. It does not reveal why we should not withdraw from morality where we can do so, nor why in practice it is virtually impossible to do so. Why should we commit ourselves and others to general policies? Why shouldn't we just legislate for ourselves, and only for ourselves, where possible? And why shouldn't we

simply live piecemeal as far as principles of action are concerned? Why should we be so keen to commit ourselves in the future?

Hare could attempt to meet these difficulties in various ways, but each way would itself lead to very serious difficulties in its turn. In any case, he would still have to account for the large areas of our lives left unprescribed, and he would also have to explain why some people are moral with a lot of lesser principles, and others are equally moral with big ways-of-life principles. Further, even though it may be a feature of moral language that it is a statement of personal commitment — and even this is arguable — the question still arises as to why someone should not opt himself out of his commitment. That is to say, why should he not confine himself to prescriptions for others and not for himself? Hare seems to want to say here that such a person would be contradicting himself. But why should he not use language arbitrarily, and why should he not contradict himself, if it suits him? Hare's account of the logic of moral terms seems to provide no basis for condemning such a person, except in the concrete situation, as one who does not accept our prescriptions.

Thus, in brief, Hare's analysis encounters serious difficulties in explaining the rationality of morality at the most important points, viz., the authority of morality, the nature of and reasons for moral disagreement, and for persistence in moral disagreement, and, more generally, why the individual should involve himself in moral commitments.

5. Hare seeks to discriminate moral prescriptions from non-moral prescriptions by reference to moral prescriptions as universal prescriptions, self-imposed and self-prescribed. This formula is completely unsatisfactory. Not all moral principles are universal and self-committing in the same senses, and not all self-committing universal prescriptions are moral principles.

To explain first concerning their alleged universality. 'Universal' could mean 'applying to all men', or simply to classes of men. If it means 'applying to all men', and only this, it would mean that this formula excludes a good deal normally thought to be within the sphere of morality, as well as including many principles not normally considered to be moral principles. The principle relating to truth-telling is completely universal — it relates to all, both as subjects and as objects. The principles of respect for one's elders and the dead bind all rational beings but relate only to a specified section of mankind. The principles relating to promise-keeping and repayment of

debts apply only to those who enter into debts and promises —
and this need not be all men — and they relate only to those
who enter into promises and debts. The principles relating to
punishment, stealing and adultery have a more restricted uni-
versality in the sense that they presuppose certain types of
organization of society. Principles relating to women, or to
men only, or to wives or to husbands, e.g., the duty of wives
to obey their husbands, are universal only in the sense of their
relating to a class. And the same is true of principles concern-
ing the duties of citizens, professional groups such as doctors,
teachers, etc., although some of these principles are derivative
from other principles universal in some fuller sense.

Hare cannot exclude any of these senses of 'universal';
yet, in terms of most of them, we can formulate principles
which we should not concede to be moral principles — not even
false moral principles. Egoism, principles of manners, rules of
taste, certain dictates of fashion — particularly those of a con-
demnatory character — and even certain precepts in sport, for
not all are of a hypothetical character, may be advanced as
universal prescriptions without thereby necessarily becoming
moral principles.

Relevant here is Hare's discussion of saints. Hare, in
terms of his formula, has a lot of trouble with judgements
relating to saints, arguing that these judgements are merely
conventional. This is not always the case, although it is prob-
ably so in the case he cites, that of St. Francis. Hare's analysis
would seem to commit him to the view that there is only one
way of life that is moral from the standpoint of any one person
at any one time. But it is clear that we can commend the life
and death of Christ or of Socrates, without prescribing the same
conduct for ourselves and others. Similarly, we can say of some
individuals that they ought to be celibate, ascetic individuals,
and of others that they should not be so self-disciplined, and
applaud both ways of life, without carrying thereby any sugges-
tion of universality or any self-committal, other than that, if
I were *exactly* as he, etc., then that is what I ought to do.
But then, many non-moral rational imperatives could have
this implication.

Judgements about saints therefore bring out the unsatis-
factoriness of the claim that moral principles may be distinguished
as prescriptions which are in an obvious sense, and in a sense
peculiar to them, universal. At the same time, these same
judgements suggest that the sense in which moral principles
may be viewed as *self-committing* prescriptions is a sense much

more sophisticated than that suggested by Hare as: 'Let me — '. We do not ask to be allowed to do as Christ or Socrates or the ascetic did; nor is the barren woman, born without the essential organs, committing herself — she cannot be — when she makes the Biblical injunction 'Be fruitful and multiply' a moral principle she tries, in her capacity as marriage guidance counsellor, to impress on her consultees. It is true that, by the end of the book, Hare waters down 'self-committal' to merely 'subscribing', but this largely establishes my point.

Thus, unless the senses of both 'universal' and 'self-committing' are explained much more subtly, they do not relate to all that is moral. This means that, as it stands, Hare's theory breaks down in a serious way, in that it does not indicate how moral and non-moral prescriptions are to be distinguished.

6. Again, Hare's account makes moral advice puzzling. How, on purely moral matters, can we instruct the next generation about moral principles, if this analysis be correct? And how is genuine moral advice, as distinct from moral exhortation, possible? Hare can only give very incomplete answers to these questions, in terms of his account of moral principles as prescriptions.

7. Hare's difficulties here expose him to the other traditional criticism relating to the tremendous arrogance of the person who accepts the subjectivist analysis, and who persists in making moral pronouncements. All that Hare's analysis does — by contrast with earlier subjectivist analyses — is to make this arrogance puzzling. It makes it incredible that modest and even humble people should wish to be so arrogant, and to continue to be so, once they have grasped the logic of their moral expressions, for Hare gives not even a hint of a motive, let alone of a motive which would plausibly explain such otherwise uncharacteristic behaviour in modest ethical subjectivists. Earlier subjectivists such as Stevenson had related the use of moral expressions to private attitudes or interests we wish to impose. This makes the behaviour of the ethical subjectivist understandable, if unplausible. Hare's analysis, on the other hand, without further additions, simply makes the arrogance of the ethical subjectivist fantastic and non-rational, perhaps even irrational.

Many more illustrations of how Hare's theory fails to overcome standard, traditional objections to subjectivism could be developed here. For example, Hare's difficulties concerning error, immorality and wickedness could be examined at length, and the same general conclusion further reinforced. This is

not necessary, for sufficient has already been said to bring out that the traditional objections to ethical subjectivism are serious objections, not easily circumvented; and further that they are such that attempts to circumvent them are likely both to be at best only partially successful, and to lead to equally serious new difficulties, peculiar to the proposed solution. Our examination of Hare's analysis illustrates how this occurs. Hare is concerned with the traditional difficulties — in particular with that relating to the rationality of morality. In his efforts to meet this difficulty, he outlines an analysis which raises innumerable, equally serious difficulties of its own; and even then, it is not successful in meeting the traditional objections to ethical subjectivism which his analysis was designed to overcome.

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ON EVIDENCE FOR IDENTITY

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It is widely realized that there is a danger in the method of considering philosophical questions in terms of invented cases. We must not import into our merely possible world attitudes formed and appropriate only in the actual world. Despite the familiarity of the danger, it often happens that one falls into the trap. I want to underline the danger by considering some cases which are associated with the question whether continuity is or isn't a necessary condition of identity. These cases are canvassed as often as the question is raised and I want to show how inappropriate it is that one should be struck by some features of these cases when the cases are merely possible. For what is striking is striking only as evidence for identity in the world as it is. The confusions are fairly subtle and complex, and since the cases are far more often raised in conversation (where they are less likely to be closely scrutinized) than in writing, error is frequent. I have a secondary aim, which is to defend the thesis that continuity is a necessary condition of identity, at least in so far as the cases I consider might seem to undermine it.

In a sense, I shall argue against a man of straw in that I shall attempt to refute the view that when an object ceases to exist, and later an exactly similar object comes into existence, the similarity has any power whatever as *evidence* for the identity of the objects. I doubt that anyone has ever argued for the view that it does have evidential weight. But, despite that, it seems pretty clear that we are apt to be *struck* by the similarity and it is only striking as evidence for identity. And being struck by it gets in the way of our correctly considering the case as one calling only for arbitrary decision. I am arguing against the "evidence" point of view because I think it *is* a submerged element in our way of looking at the case, and I want to bring it to the surface and refute it as if it were someone's considered position, in order that what I say should be as clear as possible. I want to make out the thesis, in my first part, that an appeal to similarity as evidence would involve two ways of begging the question whether the things are identical, and, in the second part, that if we do allow ourselves to appeal to similarity as evidence, then we have no right to assume that continuity has

failed. I shall not consider the logical relations between statements about continuity and identity or between statements about similarity and identity (nor which way we should vote on a case when it calls only for decision).

I.

Let us consider the following persuasive argument against the thesis I am trying to defend. "In very many, perhaps the majority of cases where we have to decide an identity question, we do not check whether a corresponding statement about continuity is true or not but simply assume it. The way in which identity questions are often, in fact, answered is by considering the state of the present object relative to the state of the former object with which it is possibly identical. So that if it is in fact the case that we often settle identity questions without a prior settling of continuity questions, we might, if the world were other than it is, regularly settle identity questions without so much as raising continuity questions by placing our whole reliance, logically, on the evidence we now often accept as adequate. In such a state of affairs, we could not claim that continuity was a necessary condition of identity." In order to defend the thesis from this attack, it is essential to go into the problem of the ways in which we do in fact settle identity questions, how the evidence typically taken into account comes to have its power as evidence for or against identity, and whether continuity is simply assumed.

If we do not consider questions of continuity in settling identity questions, then we can only consider questions of the state of a thing relative to the state of the thing with which it is putatively identical. Our interest in the relation between their states can be of one of two kinds: (*a*) in whether the states are similar in every detail; (*b*) in whether the states are similar in some respects only and in other respects different, though the differences are such that the state of the later thing coincides with what we expect, or might have expected of the earlier one. E.g., if I put a piece of honeycomb in a refrigerator at night and find a piece of honeycomb there in the morning, then its exact similarity with the piece I placed there last evening would count as evidence for its being the same piece and any dissimilarity would count towards its not being the same piece. But if I leave a piece of honeycomb beside the fire for an hour and then return, it is the wax's being in a different state (though in a state coinciding with one I expect) which is evidence for its being the same wax, and if I found a piece of

wax similar to the honeycomb I left this would be evidence
that it was not the same wax (or that it was the same, but
had not been wax or that it had been moved from the fire and
been replaced). For the sake of economy and clarity I shall
talk of these cases in terms of x's being similar to y for (*a*)
above and x's being in a state predictable of y for (*b*), where
the names "x" and "y" do not commit one as to identity or
difference. It is clear that (*a*) is a special case of x's being
in a state expected of y.

The question now arises how it is that these two kinds
of evidence merely from the states of things get to be evidence
at all. For, as we have already seen, similarity does not exclude
difference, nor of course does dissimilarity, even if, in the sense
above, it is predicted. Yet it is clear that each, in appropriate
circumstances, is taken to be quite powerful evidence for or
against identity. There are several features of our world, which
I shall try to describe, which account for this. It is important
to notice that they are features of *our* world, not of *any* world.

First of all, it is to be noticed that, typically, x's similarity
to y or x's being in a state predictable of y works most power-
fully for identity where there is prima facie evidence of continuity,
or at least no evidence of discontinuity. For the vast majority
of kinds of things, we have very good evidence indeed that they
endure. We have experience of flames, sounds, etc., passing out
of existence, ceasing or stopping, but no experience of physical
objects having such ephemeral existence. No such snuffing out
of existence has ever been observed and we very rationally "take
for granted" that it never does happen. Indeed, that matter is
conserved continuously is one of our best founded and most
basic contingent general truths.

In the cases mentioned above, the wax is taken from the
refrigerator or found beside a fire *where is was left*. It is here
that the expected state of a thing has its greatest evidential
power. Ordinarily, if there is clear evidence of discontinuity,
finding a similar thing does not give rise to a question of
identity. Also, if one comes across something y whose state
does not coincide with a possible state of x, then no question
as to the identity of x and y arises either. If I observe a thing
just before boarding a plane at London Airport and see a similar
thing when I leave the plane at Paris, I do not normally wonder
even for a second if it can be the same thing, unless the
similarities are particularly *striking* (and what constitutes a
striking similarity will be discussed subsequently). And if the
question does arise, i.e., if I do wonder about identity, then

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I wonder about how the thing could have got there. But though this is worth noticing, it says nothing to the purpose about evidence in the sort of case under discussion and is far too weak to defend the thesis on its own.

The second way in which x's being in a state predictable of a previously encountered y has evidential weight is due simply to the improbability of our finding two things exactly similar to each other (or another thing exactly similar to what we expect a given thing y to be like). This does not always obtain, however, for often there will be a high probability of multitudes of things resembling each other indistinguishably from our point of view at least, e.g., grains of sand, coins, cubes of sugar, etc. Here we should distinguish two things, (a) whether it is improbable that two grains of sand or two pennies should *exactly* resemble each other, and (b) whether it is improbable that we should find two pennies or two grains of sand so similar that we should not, in practice, be able to distinguish them. There is some confusion over (a) due to the chronic troublemaker "exactly", but I do not see how anyone can estimate the probability of there being or not being two grains of sand exactly similiar in all respects (once we decide what we mean by this), for there are so many grains.[1] In any case (a) is less important here than (b), since we are considering ways in which we do *in fact* settle identity questions and it is clear that it is not in the least improbable that we should not be able to discover dissimilarities between some similar things. And where this is so, as it is with coins, we must and do enquire carefully into the question of, e.g., where a coin was lost, and where found. It is, of course, much less probable that two indistinguishable coins should be in roughly the same place at roughly the same time than that there should just be two indistinguishable coins somewhere in the universe. The state of a thing alone, therefore, has evidential power so far as probabilities are concerned according to (a) its complexity and the consequently large number of ways we may make comparisons between it and other things; and according to (b) the scarcity of objects likely to have these properties; and it is clear that these two factors will often be connected. This suggests that there are, in fact, many cases in which it is most convenient to combine the evidence of similarity with partial (though good) evidence of continuity.

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[1] Let us assume that two objects x and y fulfil this condition: For any possible standard, S, of comparative measurement of any property or set of properties, x and y are not distinguished by S measurement.

At this point let us describe one of the typical cases from which an appeal against the necessity of continuity is made. Suppose I own a cube of marble which has a distinctive and intricate pattern in its grain. As I watch it, suddenly it vanishes from sight, nor can I detect it by any other means whatever. Surely, we may say, it has ceased to exist. Later, a cube of marble exactly similar in every way is suddenly seen just where the cube vanished. Surely, we may say, this is the same cube again. And if we do say this (and it is very tempting to say it) we should be saying that continuity is not necessary for identity.

There are striking analogies (despite equally striking dis-analogies) between features of this invented case and ordinary cases in which we are prepared to assert identity on the evidence of similarity. These analogies deserve attention. First, though discontinuity is evident here, it is of an extraordinary kind, i.e., there is a temporal gap. For the putatively identical thing is encountered just where we would have expected to encounter the object had it continued to exist. That is to say, it is, in another way, *very* like the situation in normal cases where similarity has its greatest evidential power, viz., those cases where there is *prima facie* good evidence for continuity before similarity comes into play, so to speak. It is not at all like those cases of *spatial* discontinuity where one sees a bottle at London Airport and an exactly similar bottle in Paris Airport at each end of a fast plane trip. It becomes very easy, when we deal with cases of this temporal sort, to treat the evidence of similarity just as we would treat it in an ordinary case where continuity is preserved. This point will be seen as more substantial relative to the second sort of error discussed in part II of this article.

But more important than this is the *imaginary* nature of the case introduced. It is not therefore at all a straightforward matter to suppose that correct attitudes to evidence in ordinary cases will be appropriate in such extraordinary cases. And if we examine that aspect of the evidential power of x's being in a state predictable of y which comes from probabilities in the way discussed above, we shall find that to carry our present attitude over to this imaginary case is to beg the question at issue. For suppose one flatly denies that x and y can be identical. Then one may readily grant that their non-identity is wonderfully, strikingly improbable. It is, indeed, simply incredible that there should be two cubes so intricately alike, so close together in space and time. But this should not tempt

one to give the improbability *any weight whatever* in deciding to say whether the cubes are the same or not. "For", one may say, "to appeal to the improbability of their difference is just to appeal against allowing the case at all. On my view of the relation between continuity and identity, the improbable occurrence (viz., *two* exactly similar cubes) was just what you were asking that I should imagine. To lay stress on the improbability of there being two at this stage is either to reject the case, which I shall do if you wish, or to beg the question against me by assuming that the cubes *can* be identical, i.e., by assuming that continuity is not necessary for identity."

This does not wholly explain the status of similarity nor the status of x's being in a state predictable of y as evidence for or against identity. In order to clarify this question, it is necessary to give some account of the relevance of identity to cause and change.

In our investigations into the nature of things, whether at crude or sophisticated levels, it is required that we should have ways of telling whether at one time we have the same object as we had at an earlier time; ways which do not depend on relative states of things. For if it is required to establish what changes a process P brings about in an object x, or whether Fx's can be changed to Gx's by process P (i.e., whether process P is the cause of Fx's becoming Gx's), then we shall require methods of proving that the x I now have is not merely the thing with which I began but also that it is *the thing which underwent P* (i.e., the x which was *continuous* while P lasted), and it is clear that x's state relative to y cannot be used here, since, until we have discovered the effects of P, we shall not be able to predict the future state of x (and its remaining in a similar state is only a special case of a predictable state). Often we can establish the identity and continuity by continuing to observe the x as it undergoes P, but perhaps equally often this will not be possible. However, there are, as has already been mentioned, good grounds for the generalization that physical objects are enduring, that matter does not snuff out of existence as candle flames do, and as well as this we have well founded laws of motion, etc. Both these types of generalization are used in tracing the paths of things and both in turn are extrapolations from the results gained by watching continuous stretches of the histories of things. It is clear from this that we find out about causes, the effects of processes and the natures of stuffs by learning to establish continuities and identities by means quite apart from the states of the things involved. We can predict

the future state of a thing from a present state of it combined with the conditions of its environment, only because we can observe stretches of continuity or because we can observe the beginnings and ends of stretches which, we can establish, do continue between and beyond the observed stretches, even if we cannot observe the inferred stretches themselves. In any case we must first observe stretches of continuity before we know the kind of circumstances in which we will expect a thing to remain constant in its properties (and so allow similarity as evidence for identity) and those in which we will expect a thing to change, as well as the kind of change to expect, in its properties (and so allow y's being in a state predictable of x as evidence for identity).

It should now be clear that the persuasive argument presented at the beginning of part I somewhat misrepresents the facts. For while it is true that we do regularly settle identity questions by considering the state of x relative to the state of y, it by no means follows that we are thereby neglecting questions of continuity. It is only by consideration of continuities that observations about the state of x relative to the state of y have any status whatever as evidence for deciding identity questions.

Further, this discussion will now enable us to see how it is that certain features of the state of x qualify as *striking* evidence for its identity with y. We often distinguish otherwise very similar objects by marking them, or by their being marked, by some unique process. A man may put a distinctive scratch, e.g., his initials, on the shaft of a golf club, or it may be that his car's mudguard is welded in a certain place after an accident, or he may write his name in a book. Let us call such distinctive marks traces, since it is a contingent truth of great generality and evidential power that such precisely specifiable marks appear on objects *only* as a result of their being subjected, at some time, to a quite definite process. That is to say, it is a contingent universal truth that objects do not come into existence already bearing such marks, for it is a (causally) necessary condition of having such a mark that a thing should include in its life history having been subjected to process P. Traces, therefore, will be singularly powerful pieces of evidence for identity both because it is so improbable that two objects should ever be marked in just this distinctive way, and because we are sure of this contingent general truth. An object which bears a trace must, therefore, have existed before our present observing of it.

Let us now consider another case, which includes the use of a trace as evidence for identity. What we are here being asked to imagine is that an ink-bottle with a man's initials written on the label ceases to exist and that later an ink-bottle in no discernible way different comes into existence with exactly similar lettering on its label. This is a striking and powerful piece of evidence that it is the same ink-bottle come back, or that, at the very least, this ink-bottle has existed at *some* time before its present materialization, i.e., that it is identical with *some* ink-bottle on which *some* man formerly wrote his initials. But the force of this is due to the contingent general truth about traces. However, one cannot invoke this general truth in order to give emphasis to the evidence of the initials on the label in the present case, without begging the identity question at issue in a way very like the way in which stressing the improbability begged it. For one might say that, in being asked to imagine this case, one is being asked thereby to imagine a counter-example to the contingent general truth. For only if the ink-bottles are identical can it be claimed that the general truth is not falsified. Unless one already agrees that they are identical, then one is being required to imagine that something *does* come into existence with a trace on it, but which is *not* identical with anything which includes in its history being subjected to the process which produces that trace.[2]

So in these invented cases we cannot give *any special status whatever* to any aspect of the state of a thing as evidence for its identity with some earlier thing, without begging the question. To be struck by these cases, as one almost invariably is, already prejudices our decision on them.

The argument introduced at the beginning of the article is therefore specious and incorrect, though persuasive. For, as has, I hope, been sufficiently established, it fails on the one hand to do justice to the facts in overlooking how questions of the state of x relative to the state of y do not supersede, and are

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[2] Memory is a kind of trace (J. J. C. Smart: "Temporal asymmetry of the world", *Analysis,* March, 1954, p. 80). What I have to say against traces as evidence for identity in these imagined cases also applies against attaching weight to memory in the analogous personal identity cases. The frequent charge of circularity urged against using memory as establishing identity, though it is correct, ignores the overwhelming power of one kind of knowledge of the past as evidence for identity in the ordinary case. But this power depends upon its being universally true that only by being identical with a trace can one come to have that kind of knowledge of the past. And this is a universal truth of *our* world, not of all possible worlds. I do not wish to claim that, in the case of persons, identity need be body-dependent, so perhaps *spatio*-temporal continuity is here dispensable. But some sort of continuity is essential; a person cannot wholly cease to be, and later live again.

not (in terms of this sphere of enquiry) independent of, questions about whether x and y are continuous. And it also presupposes that an attitude to evidence which is appropriate in a world where things continuously endure will be equally appropriate in a world where they do not. This assumption leads the arguer to beg the question in the two analogous ways described.

II.

This not merely disposes of the argument, but it also enables one to see more clearly through another cloud of confusions, which obscures the issue. In what follows, I shall try to show that though we can regard the cases usually introduced into this problem as decision cases, we cannot in any straightforward way regard them as decision cases related to the question whether continuity is a necessary condition of identity. My aim is to show that the more we become impressed with the feature of similarity in the case, the more we are tempted surreptitiously to suppose that x is continuous with y. It is not my intention to defend a sceptical position as to the relation between observation reports and negative existential statements, or to suggest that it would be *unreasonable* to say in the cases described that x had ceased to exist and y had later begun to exist, but to argue that, if we do say this, some attitudes to the case thereby cease to be appropriate.

First, what is a decision case? A decision case is one in which all the facts are in our possession, but what remains unclear is what we should decide to say about it. Should we say, in Wittgenstein's well-known case,[3] that the dog does, or does not, go round the cow? In decision cases it is clear that little hangs on what we say so long as we know (as we do know) all the facts. There is a clash between criteria for asserting F or not-F (or G), but there is no question of our being *ignorant*. But is the ink-bottle case one in which we know all the facts? It is not at all clear that it is.

Philosophers, when they discuss this case, take it for granted that there is no difficulty, as the case is described, about the existential statements which must be true before we have a case of discontinuity. In doing this they presumably have in mind the fact that when, ordinarily, we search a room thoroughly and find no ink-bottle, we are entitled to say there is no ink-bottle in the room. Similarly, when we search the world and

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[3] *Vide* J. Wisdom, "Metaphysics and verification", in *Philosophy and Psychoanalysis,* pp. 95-6.

find no winged horse, we are entitled to say that Pegasus does not exist. And in assuming that it is a perfectly straightforward matter that the ink-bottle ceases to exist, they are paying attention to one part of the evidence, while neglecting to consider it as a whole. This must now be done.

It is important to notice that cases in which the confusion I now wish to clarify occurs are described in terms of a predicament in which we might find ourselves puzzled owing to our human limitations. We are told only what is observed by a person in this situation. We are not given a set of statements about existence and similarity such that we can test the logical relation between them and a statement of identity or difference. We are only given the evidence on which statements about identity and existence might be made.

If we are to examine the case evidentially we must first consider the question whether we shall be justified, given the observations described, in asserting that the ink-bottle ceased to exist. Statements of non-existence are, some might claim, impossible to verify.[4] This view, though not entirely without substance, is mistaken in part and we must notice some exceptions to it. The reasons for holding this view are that, for positive existential statements, e.g., "Pegasus exists", we can specify an observation-result, or set of them, such that if we obtained the result or set of results at any one time and place we should have verified the existential statement. That is to say, we can specify a result such that, if we achieved it at the first observation, we could cease to search. This is not true of negative existential statements. This does not mean that all positive existential statements are, in fact, always easier to verify than negative ones. For, obviously, the same search will be required to verify "Pegasus exists" as to verify "Pegasus does not exist" and, assuming there is no winged horse, any set of observations will be inconclusive. The difference is only that we can *specify* a successful observation for the one, but not for the other, for there is no finite number of places (and so no specifiable *set* of places) such that an observation-result in all would verify the negative statement, and there is no observation-result such that if we obtained it first we could cease our search.

But there are three kinds of case of which this is not true, exemplified by the statements "Oxford does not exist", "Napoleon does not exist" and "No one is in the room". In

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[4] It is doubtful if anyone would make so strong a claim as this. But see Russell on Wittgenstein, *Mind,* 1951, p. 297.

the first case we can specify a place in England where we can observe and if we find no buildings in that place we shall have verified the statement. In the second we can find bodily remains of what was clearly the man and establish, by the state of the remains, that he has been destroyed, i.e., has died. In similar cases, we can specify an observation result (finding a body, the rubble of a bombed building, the ashes of a box) such that if we achieved it at any one time we should have verified the negative statement. The third case, like the first, sets a convenient boundary to the area of search, and finding nothing answering the given description within that area verifies the negative existential statement. But, these exceptions apart, it remains tenable that negative existential statements are unverifiable. It is obvious that, for the present purpose, these three cases are of no importance, for in the cases we are considering, where a thing is not observed where it formerly was, the negative existential statement in question does not fall within either of these three classes of verifiable statements. Except perhaps within the third class, but here the situation is complicated by the fact that the object *did* exist, and in this room. While, in fact, there are commonsensically limited requirements for what is to constitute establishing the non-existence of a Pegasus, it is not at all clear how to limit the requirement for establishing as acceptable (if not *proved*) the particular negative existential statement under discussion. For things just do not pass clean out of existence. The ink-bottle might always continue to exist, but have moved *to another place,* but too quickly for us to notice, etc.

It will be objected that this ignores the point that the evidence given in the case may be very powerful, as good as we could ever have, for saying that the thing does not exist at the specified time, and that the power of this evidence is not lightly to be neglected. This is a valid objection only so long as we do not consider the evidence presented by the case as a whole. For what complicates the question and calls in doubt the negative result of the observations made in the "time-gap" is the later appearance of an ink-bottle exactly resembling the one which disappeared. Things no more come clean into existence than they pass clean out. The case now becomes so peculiar that it is very hard to see what ought to be said about continuity and existence as well as about identity.

One reason for this cannot be too much emphasized and repeated. It is a very well established truth that objects endure, and so powerful is our belief in this that the hypothesis of some

kind of disappearance and reappearance in such cases is hardly to be neglected as being more fantastic than the hypothesis of ceasing to exist and materialization. This does not mean that we *cannot* be asked to imagine that a thing has ceased to exist and a thing has come into existence. But, as was shown in the first part of the paper, this puts us in a position where some attitudes to evidence are inappropriate. The attraction of putting the case in terms of our human predicament is that, given our world and our present attitude to evidence, the evidence here is so very powerful for the identity of x and y.

This suggests another related reason why it is hard to see, in such a case, what we ought to say about continuity as well as about identity. In our world the very same evidence which establishes identity also establishes continuity. So that, where similarity is powerful evidence for identity, there is also powerful evidence for continuity.

It might be objected at this point that this argument is inconsistent with my earlier argument, that establishing identity by means of continuity is prior to similarity's being evidence for identity at all. However, the inconsistency is only apparent. The first argument supposed we did not know about causal processes, i.e., know either the circumstances in which the properties of various kinds of things remained constant, or those in which they changed, or how they changed when they did change. It urged that the only way of coming to learn this was by observing stretches of continuity. It is a necessary condition for the state of x relative to the state of y becoming evidence for or against their identity, that we should have gained this knowledge ultimately in this way. The second argument presupposes our having such knowledge and sees similarity as evidence for continuity (wherever it is evidence for identity) against a background of such learned facts. So the arguments are not inconsistent, as might have been supposed.

Another objection might arise here. If we settle identity and continuity questions in the light of the very same evidence, then it may be the case that the evidence establishes identity and there is an *inference* from this to continuity. This would mean that the identity question was prior to the continuity question and not that the former was decided in the light of the answer to the latter. This is mistaken, for there is but one kind of inference which could be involved here, viz., a *deductive* inference. So that if identity, according to this objection, is a logically sufficient condition of continuity, then continuity must be a necessary condition of identity. This grants the point and

so is no objection. No other suggestion as to the kind of infer-
ence will do, for it could not be a simple induction, since it
is just false that every time we have established identity, we
have (independently) *observed* continuity. Nor would it be at all
plausible to argue that continuity was a cause of identity. This
would be utterly absurd. So it remains true that the state of
x relative to the state of y is evidence for continuity in all
those cases in which it is evidence for identity.

In this case, therefore, there is a clash of evidence as to what
we should say about continuity and identity. The evidence of
the negative results of the observations during the "time-gap"
suggests both that the ink-bottle ceased to exist and that the
ink-bottle which is later observed is a different one from the
first. The evidence of similarity between the thing observed
before the gap and the thing observed after it suggests that
it is the same ink-bottle and that it merely disappeared or had
been in very rapid motion, etc., during the gap. It is by no
means straightforward to decide whether the object had ceased
to exist, since the evidence taken as a whole is not univocal for
non-existence. In so very bizarre a case, it is quite true to say
that we should be very exercised indeed about the question of
identity, but it is also true that we should be generally baffled
as to how to go beyond the given data in any way whatever.
We may, if we wish, say that such cases call for conventional
decision. But no decision is called for on *this* question: Is
continuity a necessary condition of identity? For this question,
the cases must be described in terms of statements about con-
tinuity of existence, not in terms of evidence for the statements.
And when the cases are so described, no legislation is called
for, since the structure of language already contains the answer.

It should be noticed that one need not be embroiled in a
phenomenalist-sceptical controversy in order to urge the fore-
going arguments. It is not being suggested that there is neces-
sarily and chronically a logical gap between statements of what
is observed (i.e., statements about sense data, for example)
and negative statements of existence. If it were, the argument
would apply *mutatis mutandis* to the statements of what is
observed supporting the positive existential statement. For the
very fact that the "thing" disappears for a time might be thought
a good reason for saying it was never there at all, and that
the whole thing was an hallucination. And it is, of course, true
that the cases need not be so very different from the ones we
have dealt with for this attitude to be as appropriate as any.
But I do not wish to urge such a view of the question. What

is important is to see that, besides this, it is as rational as any other hypothesis to suppose that the thing was somewhere else when we failed to observe it.

The confusion examined in Part II may be summed up as follows. In cases such as this, there is a tendency to set up a tension between the *evidence* of similarity as against the *statement* of discontinuity. But the statement of discontinuity is not a piece of evidence on the same level, logically, as the observed similarity. For the statement is to be made *in the light of* the evidence, which includes the similarity as a part. It is a thorough confusion to create a clash between a statement and part of the evidence taken into account in making it. As was argued in the earlier part of the article, once we have reached the stage of making the statement of discontinuity, the observed similarity has ceased to have the evidential weight which it is so tempting to give to it.

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CONDITIONING AND FREEDOM

By K. J. Scott

Motivational research, hidden persuasion, conditioning by subliminal advertising, are on our minds the way 1984 was a few years ago. But there is something untidy about these new menaces. The villains are not sinister enough. The Madison Avenue boys in grey flannel suits that every country has are good novel material, good film fodder, but not for 1984ish parts. They seem so innocuous — unless we decide that their naïveté, their social irresponsibility, is itself sinister. Devils are predictable, but sorcerers' apprentices are not. We cannot guess what might happen to us if we became the puppets of subliminal advertisers. In one way it would be worse than 1984. We would have things done to us unbeknown to us. Conditioning is an affront to human dignity. It robs us of our freedom to live our own lives in our own ways. Conditioning and freedom are antithetical. At least, we tend to think they are. Thus Aldous Huxley, in a television interview that was reported in *The Listener* a few months ago, said that freedom is diminished by propaganda as used by Hitler and by American advertisers, and he went on to assess the danger to freedom that is implicit in subliminal advertising. What I want to do is to examine this way of thinking about conditioning. What I am going to suggest is that when we see the issue of conditioning in terms of freedom we are using the term 'freedom' in a new way. Now if that were all it would be hardly worthy of notice, seeing we are constantly using words in new ways. But it is not all. This new usage has got accepted without being recognised as an innovation. And unless we see how the new usage differs from the old we shall be in danger not only of thinking confusedly about conditioning but of muddying all our thinking about freedom.

Compare some of the other new ways the word 'freedom' has been used in the past century or two. There have been plenty of them, and that is not surprising, for with excessive government the characteristic danger of modern times, and freedom the dominant social ideal, it is only to be expected that all sorts of social reformers should claim that the reforms they advocate are new ways of realising freedom. We have this when Rousseau says we can be forced to be free, when Green says that freedom is not just the absence of restraint but is a positive opportunity to do things that are worth doing,

when Franklin D. Roosevelt gives the name 'freedom from want' to the provision of an economic minimum. Now in all these cases there is no suggestion that the word 'freedom' is being used in its primary sense. In each case a new secondary meaning is being quite frankly added. Rousseau is being consciously paradoxical, Green is being consciously analogical, Roosevelt is being consciously rhetorical. These innovations in usage provide illuminating ways of seeing old problems in a new light. Their very effectiveness depends on the contrast between the primary meaning and the new secondary meaning. But when we say that conditioning impairs freedom we are ostensibly using the word in its primary sense, and that is where the danger of confusion comes in.

For we are not using the word in its primary sense. In its primary sense, freedom is the absence of restraint. When we talk about freedom we take our desires as data, and ask whether any restraint prevents us from giving effect to them. But when we talk about conditioning we no longer take our desires as data. We ask where our desires came from. And if we talk about conditioning in terms of freedom we are confusing two separate problems: the philosophical problem of free-will and determinism; and the social problem of freedom and restraint. The philosophical problem is about the internal causes of our behaviour; are we determined to react to our present environment in a particular way? This problem about the internal causes of our behaviour is not concerned with any restraints there may be on our freedom. The social problem is about some of the external causes of our behaviour; are we restrained from acting in a particular way? And this problem about restraints is not concerned with whether we possess free-will. It is easy to see how conditioning comes to be considered in a confused way. Conditioning is like restraint in being something external, and so it comes to be thought of as posing the same sort of problem as restraint. But conditioning operates by altering our internal make-up, and thus becomes an internal cause of the way we react to our environment. The problem it raises is the philosophical problem of free-will, not the social problem of freedom — though, of course, it raises other social problems. There is another way of distinguishing the subject-matters of these two problems that makes the point even clearer. The philosophical problem is concerned with the anterior causes of our behaviour, and the social problem with some of the current causes of our behaviour. Conditioning is an anterior cause. Conditioning and restraint are unrelated.

I said that freedom is the absence of restraint. Perhaps a word of defence is needed. For this kind of definition is sometimes criticised as a negative, nineteenth-century definition. There is a school of thought that says that freedom is opportunity, means, ability, power. This is to out-Green Green, and take Green's secondary meaning as being the primary meaning. The answer to this kind of view is to be found by examining common habits of speech. When the word 'freedom' is being used to mean the absence of restraint, it falls on the ear as the right word to use. When it is used to mean opportunity, means, ability, power, there is always an air of paradox. We know that some sort of point is being scored when are told that the poor man is not free to dine at the Ritz, that the ordinary citizen is not free to be a press magnate, that there is no freedom for a woman to become prime minister. The idiomatic way of voicing these social criticisms would be to lament not the absence of freedom but the absence of opportunity, means, ability, power. Departures from idiom do not alter the primary meaning of the word 'freedom'; they only illustrate one or another of the word's secondary meanings.

But to say that freedom is the absence of restraint is to offer a label rather than a definition. For one thing, 'restraint' could be taken to be a purely environmental term, and freedom is not something purely environmental, but a relation between a person and his environment. We should say, more fully, that freedom is the absence of restraint on doing what we desire to do. Restraint operates through deterrents and inducements. We are deterred by threats from doing what we would otherwise do, or induced by threats to do what we would not otherwise do. Sometimes there is only the deterrent, sometimes only the inducement, and sometimes we are both deterred from doing one thing and induced to do another. 'Restraint' is not as good a term as 'constraint', for 'restraint' suggests only deterrents, and 'constraint' is a broader term suggesting both deterrents and inducements. So from now on I mean to write of constraint.

Not every threat succeeds in constraining us. We may choose to ignore a threat. We may think the risk is worth running, perhaps because we think the unpleasant consequences threatened are relatively unimportant, perhaps because we think they are not very likely to happen. We are not deterred by the prospect of a penny fine on an overdue library book, we are not deterred by a law that we know has become a dead letter. If we ignore a threat, then we are *ipso facto* free despite the attempt to constrain us — though we may have to endure

the consequences. The people who are especially resistant to threats have the widest freedom, though they may have to suffer for it : heroes, criminals, saints. On the other hand, people who yield to a threat because of morbid timidity probably should not be regarded as being constrained. They should be regarded as being free, though as choosing to exercise their freedom in an odd way. For the effect of a threat to constitute constraint, we must yield to the threat, and we must be acting sensibly in yielding to it. We are constrained only when we are reasonably deterred by a threat from doing what we would otherwise do, or reasonably induced by a threat to do what we would not otherwise do. Constraint operates by creating a new desire, the desire to avoid the unpleasant consequences that are threatened, and thus weakening the relative strength of our spontaneous desire to do what we would otherwise do. The social problem of freedom and constraint is concerned with the creation of the new desire and the weakening of the spontaneous desire. So it was an over-simplification to say that the social problem of freedom and constraint takes our desires as data. What I should have said was that the social problem of freedom and constraint takes as a datum the spontaneous desire to do what we would do in the absence of constraint. The social problem is concerned only with whether we are constrained from giving effect to this spontaneous desire, and is not concerned with whether it had its origin in conditioning. Conditioning has nothing to do with freedom.

I was saying that constraint works through threats. Only threats can constrain us. The prospect of reward cannot constrain us. We can see this if we compare two ways of persuading our son to mow a lawn. If we say that if he does not mow the lawn he will not get his half-crown pocket-money, and he submits to the threat, he mows the lawn under constraint. If we say that if he mows the lawn he will get an extra half-crown in addition to his pocket-money, and he accepts the offer, he mows the lawn freely. One way is approximately as effective as the other in getting the lawn mown, but we would say that in the first situation he is constrained and in the second he is free. Suppose we offer him five pounds instead of a half-a-crown. He would be certain to accept the offer. He could be more sure of controlling his conduct by offering him five pounds than by threatening to withhold half-a-crown. That is, in this case we could be more sure of controlling his conduct by an approach that does not impair his freedom than by one that does. Control works through many mechanisms and of

these constraint is only one. I suspect that people who regard conditioning as impairing freedom base this view on an unspoken major premise that whenever we respond to control we are by definition under constraint. But this major premise is false. There are many forms of control that do not involve constraint. Conditioning is one of them.

Another distinction between constrained conduct and conditioned conduct hinges on the nature of the choice we make. Usually when we are constrained we yield to the threat reluctantly, and we feel frustrated. We sometimes feel the same way in other situations where we have to make an embarrassing choice. But we are not likely to feel this way merely because we are giving effect to a spontaneous desire that had its origin in conditioning. Conditioned conduct not only is not constrained conduct but does not feel like constrained conduct.

Scholarly writers on the nature of freedom have given little attention to the question whether conditioning impairs freedom. They talk about post-hypnotic suggestion as an instance of determination, and do not enquire whether it is also an instance of constraint. But Professor Ayer did deal with indoctrination in an article he wrote for *Horizon* in 1944. He began his discussion by stating a *prima-facie* view. He said that in a completely planned society whose members were trained from birth for their respective functions, and were so thoroughly conditioned that they never conceived any desires but those that were appropriate to their station, the subjects would seem to themselves to be free since they were granted the ability to satisfy their desires; but we, surveying the whole system from the outside, would judge, without hesitation, that they are not really free. Then he criticised this *prima-facie* view. He said that if young people can be conditioned by their environment, then young people in England too must be moulded by conditioning, though for the planned action of a ruling caste there is substituted the largely unplanned action of parents, nurses, schoolmasters, writers, politicians, lovers, and friends. This is apparently the *reductio ad absurdum* of the *prima-facie* view that indoctrination impairs freedom. If conditioning is effective, and impairs freedom, then we are none of us free, for, as Professor Ayer says, if we had enough information about our antecedents, we could always find a reason for our acting as we do, and this chain of reasons must eventually carry us to facts that are in no way attributable to ourselves. Professor Ayer finished rather inconclusively. On the one hand he

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endorses his criticism of the *prima-facie* view, saying that, if we believe that antecedent determination impairs freedom, it is illogical to apply this belief to planned conditioning and not apply it to the whole of human conduct. On the other hand, he says that any faithful account of the current conception of freedom is bound to take account of the *prima-facie* view that skilful indoctrination impairs freedom. I feel that if Professor Ayer had been analysing the nature of freedom instead of analysing the current conception of freedom he would have finished with a firm statement that it is illogical to combine the views that conditioning impairs freedom and that human conduct is ever free.

I conclude that subliminal advertising cannot impair freedom. This one particular criticism of subliminal advertising is based on confused thinking. It may be that there are other serious moral objections to it. I think there are, but they lie outside the scope of my subject.

Finally I want to consider how we can have come to believe that conditioning impairs freedom. I think the answer is to be found in our attitudes to totalitarian regimes over the past generation. We have criticised these regimes for withholding freedom from their citizens. At first all that we meant was that the opponents of the regimes had to conform or suffer the consequences. Once we had got into the habit of thinking of these regimes as withholding freedom, we were faced with the problem of reconciling this with the fact that millions of loyal supporters of these regimes were glad to have an opportunity to obey the rules under which they lived. The only way to interpret this phenomenon as constraint was to say that indoctrination is a denial of freedom. And now we have come to believe that what is true of indoctrination is equally true of other kinds of conditioning, and we say that subliminal advertising is a denial of freedom. My thesis is that this view is based on a confusion of two issues that philosophers have succeeded in keeping separate for centuries : the philosophical question of free-will and determinism, and the social question of freedom and constraint. It would be ironical if our generation, in which so many philosophers see the task of philosophy as being a task of clarification, should be the generation that confuses these issues. Conditioning is determination, but it is not constraint.

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PHENOMENALISM: A SURVEY AND REASSESSMENT

By J. P. McKinney

I. *General Considerations*

It is a sobering reflection that, had the phenomenalist been able to make good his claim to have discovered the essential nature of the thing of our everyday world, and by corollary, of course, the nature of the world itself, he would thereby have instituted a complete revolution in our conception of knowledge: in our conception, that is, of our relationship as rational beings to one another and to our external environment. And the significance of this lies in the fact that what has been called "the modern crisis of feeling and of thought" consists in the failure of the traditional sense of that relationship. It is not so long since thought and action, despite the inherent diversities of individual outlooks, cohered within a commonly accepted conception of both rationality and reality. Today that ancient assurance has gone. We are all thrown back on our own resources. Of necessity — a painful and bewildering necessity to many — we are all moral and intellectual opportunists, feeling our way from one situation to another, hoping for the emergence of some new assurance, some new and all-comprehending way of looking at things.

It was just such a revolutionary new way of looking at things that was implicit in the phenomenalist's claim. For what that claim amounted to was that the world, which throughout the history of thought had been accepted as the self-subsistent *cause of* the sort of experience any normal individual had, was in fact a *construction from* that individual's own experience. If the full implications of this are faced, there is nothing left of our traditional ways of thought — startling as this may at first sound. This is so because, on the phenomenalist view, we do not face a self-subsistent world whose structure we are gradually getting to know, but a world which is a structure of experiences. If the phenomenalist were right, it would be this experiential structure that we were getting to understand. We would not be getting to *know* the *world,* but getting to know how knowledge itself has arisen out of experience.

But the phenomenalist failed to make good his position. After some preliminary and somewhat perverse thrusts, in which

he set out to shock the traditionalists by asserting that "things didn't exist" or that they were "mere fictions", it emerged that the data of any individual's experience was insufficient to account for the world-picture which that individual actually possessed.

As Ayer has expressed it, "If the phenomenalist is right, the existence of a physical object . . . must be a sufficient condition for the occurrence . . . of certain sense-data . . . and the occurrence of the sense-data must be a sufficient condition for the existence of the physical object"; and, he suggests, neither of these conditions is in fact fulfilled.[1]

But this criticism raises a peculiar difficulty. As we have seen, if we accept the full implications of the phenomenalist standpoint — and that is the only legitimate approach to the problem he has raised — what has traditionally been accepted as a self-subsistent object which is the cause of the individual's experiential data is, on the contrary, a construction from his experiential data. So, if the phenomenalist is right, it would not be possible to trace the steps from the self-subsistent "object" to the individual's sense-data, or from the sense-data to the "object", because, by definition, the "object" is not an entity of that self-subsistent order. In which case, though the failure to trace such steps might not be sufficient proof that the phenomenalist was right, it would not be proof at all that he was wrong. Whatever may be the nature of the connection between "sense-data" and "object", if the phenomenalist is right it will not be of the kind assumed in the above criticism.

But this itself has a peculiar implication. If the above criticism is the principal ground for refuting the phenomenalist's claim, then the phenomenalist's claim has not in fact been refuted. If the phenomenalist is wrong, he is wrong for some reason that has not so far been adduced. This seems to require us to look again at the phenomenalist's claim.

II. *The Object*

A significant feature of the "object" which has been the subject of the phenomenalist's analysis and redefinition — I think we might say, its essential feature from our standpoint as experiencing beings — is that it is common to all of us. Indeed, to function as an object, a something of which we have knowledge, it must have the characteristic of objectivity, it cannot be subjective and personal. The pink rats which a man in the "horrors" sees crawling up the wall are not objects in this

[1] A. J. Ayer: *The Problem of Knowledge*, pp. 124-5.

sense — they are purely subjective denizens of his own peculiar and private world. The story is told of a man in such a state who said "Never mind, I've got a mongoose to catch the rats". When it was pointed out to him that they were imaginary rats, he said, "Well, so is the mongoose". There is an essential distinction between the subjective and objective worlds.

As objective or common, the thing of our everyday experience has this further significant character, that it functions as a common *form* toward which, as individual experients, we orient ourselves.

A thing, say a tree, acts as a form in terms of which the individual organizes his experience. This is so whether we regard the tree as an eternal pattern stored up in heaven, as a function of the structure of the human mind, or as a self-subsistent entity "out there"; whatever view we take, the tree is a common form which acts as the organizing principle for the experience of all individuals.

The question thus is not "Are there forms governing the individual's experience?" but "What is the nature and the origin of the forms that govern the individual's experience?".

It would seem, then, that the real flaw in the phenomenalist account of knowledge arises, not from the impossibility of relating "physical things" to sensory data, but from the impossibility of deriving the *common* form "thing" — common in the sense that it is valid for all experients — from the data (whether sensory or otherwise) of the individual's *private* experience.

Let us stand back from this difficulty and take an over-all view of the situation we are involved in.

The phenomenalist view of knowledge is a development of the empiricist tradition which regards knowledge as a function of experience. To this general empiricist thesis there does not seem to be any alternative, unless we are prepared to fall back on some kind of extra-experiential factor or principle to help us out.

Empiricism says: All knowledge is a function of experience. But experience is an abstract term. In practice it necessarily means individual experience. And it is in the nature of the case that individual experience is peculiar and private to the individual.

Phenomenalism says: Knowledge is a function of or a construction from the data of individual experience. Phenomenalism makes explicit what was implicit in empiricism. Indeed, looked at in this way, phenomenalism is not a modern

theory of knowledge which the phenomenalist has arrived at on his own intellectual initiative. It is simply the logical implication of the empirical standpoint, of which the development of thought has made him aware.

The implication of all this is rather drastic. We cannot adhere to the empirical standpoint and reject phenomenalism, because the latter is simply the logical working out of the former. For this reason, it would be better to drop the term "phenomenalism", with the confused complex of associations that have gathered around it, and speak simply of empiricism.

But the implication that immediately concerns us is that the phenomenalist view of knowledge, as currently formulated, lands us in a contradiction: the only and necessary source of knowledge is the data of individual experience, but the experience of any individual we examine is insufficient to account for the knowledge that individual is found to possess.

There is a still further difficulty which may be glanced at here. I refer to the so-called "Egocentric Predicament". It has peculiar implications for the empirical theory of knowledge, which are easily overlooked.

For the curious feature of the Egocentric Predicament is that, if it existed, we would not be able to say that it did. Conversely, the fact that we can and do say that it exists, the fact that we are able to communicate our ideas concerning it to one another, is *prima facie* proof that it does not exist. The predicament is usually formulated in this way: The knowledge I possess must have been derived by me, by way of construction or inference, from my own private data. Even the knowledge I receive by way of verbal or other instruction must come to me in the form of words or other symbols which, ultimately, present themselves to me as data of my own consciousness. Or, simply, I can experience only my data, you yours, and never the twain shall meet. Stated in this form, the Egocentric Predicament seems to commit us to a fundamental solipsism from which there can be no escape.

This looks like a deadlock. But it can't be. If the above account of knowledge were correct knowledge could never have been arrived at. But knowledge *has* been arrived at. We *have* knowledge. Furthermore, knowledge means common knowledge: what is not common is not, in any strict sense, knowledge at all, as the case of the pink rats made clear. Theoretically, we are all prisoners of the Egocentric Predicament; actually, the predicament has been overcome in the body of common forms we call knowledge.

So the question facing us is: How, despite the so-called Egocentric Predicament, has common knowledge been derived from the data of private individual experience? Or, alternatively: How have private experiential data been raised to the level of common communicable knowledge? We know that they have been so raised. The question is, how?

Phenomenalism, in the form in which it has been accepted by its adherents and rejected by its critics, has been unable to tell us this. But on consideration it is seen that the Phenomenalist makes *two* claims regarding the thing of our everyday experience: (1) that it is a construction from the data of experience, and (2) that it is a construction which each of us makes directly from the data of our own experience. When the phenomenalist's thesis is stated in this form it can be seen that it is (2) — what we may call the Special Thesis of phenomenalism, namely that things are constructions which we each make from our own experiential data, that has failed to stand up to critical examination. Can (1), what we may call the General Thesis of phenomenalism, that things are constructions from the data of (individual) experience without any stipulation as to how this construction is effected, give us any better account of knowledge? The specific cause of this failure of the Special Thesis of phenomenalism, it can now be seen, is that we were trying to show how the individual organizes his private data in such a way as to give rise to the (common) forms which he uses for the organization of his private data.

The difficulty has been frankly stated by Bertrand Russell:

" . . . empiricism, as a theory of knowledge, is self-refuting. For, however it may be formulated, it must involve some general proposition about the dependence of know-ledge upon experience; and any such proposition, if true, must have as a consequence that itself cannot be known. While, therefore, empiricism may be true, it cannot, if true, be known to be so."[2]

It is evidently the fact that experience necessarily means individual experience that has led to the phenomenalist's Special Thesis. There is a peculiar feature of this thesis which we have not yet taken into account. If each one of us constructs our world-picture, or what more generally we may call know-ledge, from the data of our own experience, then knowledge — which is knowledge only if it is *common* and *communicable* —

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[2] *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth,* p. 165.

begins afresh with each one of us. But the implication of this is that each one of us is the source of *all* knowledge: the infant in his cot, starting from his state of original nescience, and confined within the limits of his own experience, is to be the originator of a body of knowledge which will have universal and necessary validity. All of which is, of course, absurd.

But this absurdity serves to draw our attention to the fact that the body of common forms we call knowledge, though analysis assures us that it necessarily has its beginnings in the data of individual experience, does not, as a matter of observable fact and independently of any theoretical considerations, begin with the experience of any one of us. The infant obviously does not generate the common forms out of his own experience; he enters progressively into an already established body of forms. Each generation takes over the forms (no doubt adding to them in the process) from the previous generation. This clearly means that the beginning of this system of forms is to be found, not in the present, but in the past, and this would necessarily mean, we must remind ourselves, not in present individual experience, but in past individual experience.

This is the statement of our problem. And at once it raises the question: Is the problem of knowledge to be solved by pushing it back from the present into the past? Superficially the answer might appear to be: No, the problem is not to be solved in this way. But on consideration it is seen that the answer must be: Yes, this is the only way in which it *can be* solved. It is only by following the problem back into the past that it can be solved, because it is in the past that it *has been* solved; it was in the past that men originally solved it.

We of the present generation are not setting out to solve the problem of knowledge. This is so obvious that it hardly needs to be stated. And yet, just because it is so obvious, it is easily overlooked. It is only because we have knowledge that the problem of knowledge arises for us. Clearly, then, the problem facing us is not, How *is* knowledge possible? but, How has knowledge *become* possible?.

The merit of phenomenalism is that it presents this problem to us in the specific form: How has common objective knowledge, valid for all experients, been derived from the subjective and private data of individual experience? And this, as phenomenalism also shows, is a question as to the *beginning* of knowledge. And this again must be taken as meaning the *very* beginning, the emergence of knowledge out of a primordial state of nescience. We are not talking about the beginning of

knowledge, while we assume in any degree or form an already established body of knowledge.

III. *The Beginning of Knowledge*

At once, of course, the objection arises that we cannot know anything of such pre-cultural or proto-cultural beginnings that would be relevant to the solution of our problem. But here again phenomenalism indicates the answer, for it tells us, not what our primitive forebears thought — in any case we are discussing a state preceding thought — but what were the conditions out of which thought, and knowledge, and culture, necessarily arose. It tells us that these arose out of the data of individual experience. But it tells us more than this. For we know, from the failure of the Special Thesis of phenomenalism, that knowledge did not arise out of the data of any one individual's experience; a truth which seems to be independently confirmed in the "Egocentric Predicament", which draws our attention to the fact that the individual, by virtue of his individuality, is a closed unit of experience.

But it is at this point that the real significance of phenomenalism begins to emerge. As we have seen, knowledge itself is a refutation of the Egocentric Predicament. We *have* knowledge, we *do* communicate with one another. If someone calls out "Fire!" in a hotel corridor at night, everybody somehow escapes from his egocentric prison, and makes for the head of the stairs by the shortest possible route. This prison, in fact, is a purely theoretical one, inhabited only by philosophers, and by these only between nine and four, Mondays to Fridays.

But this does not mean that the Egocentric Predicament is a philosophical delusion. It does not apply to us, who possess knowledge, because knowledge, that meshwork of objective meanings through the mediation of which we break free from the prison of our innate subjectivity, *is* the transcending of that original psychic isolation; that, from the circumstances out of which knowledge has arisen, is its essential and necessary character.

The truth of the Egocentric Predicament does not lie in the present, it lies in the past. Once knowledge is established, the "predicament" no longer applies, because knowledge is the overcoming of that predicament. But until knowledge is established, it does apply: each individual, as a separate experiential unit, is confined within the limits of his own private and incom-

municable data. *It is out of the experiential data of separate individual men that knowledge is to emerge*: data which are discontinuous as between individual and individual, and indeterminate as not yet being determined within any common system of concepts.

In other words: *knowledge,* as the General Thesis of phenomenalism, backed up by the Egocentric Predicament, makes clear, *is a complex function of all men's experience.*

The steps that lead to this conclusion may be summarized as follows:

1. We *have* knowledge, which is a common inter-subjective system of meanings or forms.
2. It is innate in the human situation that the individual is confined within his own subjectivity — the so-called "Egocentric Predicament".
3. Knowledge, as an inter-subjective system of forms, is thus a transcending of these innate subjectivities.
4. Knowledge, as a transcending of these innate subjectivities, is thus a function *of* these subjectivities.

It will be noted that there is no reference here to *how* these innate subjectivities have been transcended. Our present concern is only with the fact — the fact that we have knowledge and that, because of the circumstances out of which it arose, this is its essential nature: the specific sense in which, as the General Thesis of phenomenalism asserts, it is a function of individual experience.

Knowledge is not derived directly by each one of us from the data of our own experience. It is an established system of common forms in terms of which we organize our private data. It is a historical growth, having its roots in our pre-cultural past, and its starting-points in the data of individual experience. Knowledge, as a historical growth, is a function of individual experience in the specific sense that it has been constituted out of elements of experience which are essentially discontinuous and indeterminate; it is the expression of a complex procedure of abstraction from, and correlation of, not a direct derivative of, these discontinuous and indeterminate elements of individual experience.

When knowledge finally emerges as a closely-integrated system of concepts and meanings, it is not the expression of a relationship between the individual and an external self-subsistent reality; it is the expression of a relationship between experiences, between the experiences of separate individuals. It is Man, not

men, that knows. It seems natural to speak of the individual's mind "making a working model of reality",[3] but — leaving aside a difficulty regarding "mind", which is itself an abstraction — "reality", seen in the light of a rigorous empiricism, *is* a model which the individual uses for the interpretation of his private data. He does not construct the model from the data, he relates the data to the model.

The attempt to trace the steps from an individual's experience here and now to an "external thing" necessarily fails, because the individual is not "seeing" a "thing" in the sense assumed. The thing is a common experiential form, a function, by abstraction and correlation, of all men's experiences. The individual's act of "seeing" consists in subsuming his otherwise indeterminate immediate data under the appropriate common form. To "see" is to judge that these present data belong under that common form. When, to take a stock example, I "see" an elliptical brown patch and yet affirm this to be a penny, which is round, I am obviously not constructing the round penny from my elliptical datum. I am interpreting my datum in terms of the already constructed experiential form, penny. Seeing is the name we give to this judgment when it is carried out in terms of visual data.

But to say that knowledge is not a relationship between an individual and a self-subsistent reality, but a relationship between experiences, is not an assertion that "there is no such thing as objective reality". It is not an assertion as to either the existence or the non-existence of reality, it is an assertion as to how conceptions such as "existence" and "reality" have arisen out of experience. It says that in the nature of the case — in the nature of the fact that knowledge is a function of experience — the term "objective reality" means this experiential complex, which is objective in the sense that it is an abstraction, not from your subjective experience or mine, but from the experience of all individuals. Reality is the name for the essence of all experience; it is a piece of funded common experience.

That knowledge has a history going back into the dim recesses of man's past will hardly be questioned, but it might seem that this is not a fact having any relevance to the problem of knowledge in the complex form in which it presents itself to modern man. But it is not this complexity that constitutes the problem of knowledge. As a famous lady remarked, when

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[3] Quoted by E. O. Adrian *Physical Background of Perception*, p. 93, from K. J. W. Craik's *The Nature of Explanation*.

the miracle was reported of a priest, who had recently been guillotined, being seen walking the streets of Paris carrying his head under his arm: "In such cases it is the first step that counts." In the case of knowledge, no matter what its final complexity, it is the first step, or, as we should now say, the first steps, that count; the first steps toward that complex procedure of abstraction and correlation — if something which was necessarily unconscious and groping and intuitive should be called a procedure — by which a structure of common, objective knowledge was to be built up out of the elements of private subjective experience; a structure which, because it transcended the experience of any individual, presented itself as being independent of all experience, and which, because it was valid for all experients, seemed like the self-subsistent cause *of* experience.

It is the merit of phenomenalism — which is only empiricism carried to its logical limits — to have indicated where the solution of the problem of knowledge is to be sought, and what is the essential nature of the complex system of common forms which constitute that solution: common in the sense that they are a function of the whole diverse range of human capacities for experience; and forms in the sense that, as functions of all men's experience, they act as principles of organization for the experience of all individuals.

IV. *Implications*

It has not been found possible to account for the body of knowledge we actually possess, in terms of the individual's own experience. On the other hand, it can be seen to be equally impossible to account for knowledge as a function of experience, except as a function of all men's experience.

Between these two conceptions of knowledge as (a) a direct function of one individual's experience, and as (b) a complex function, by abstraction and correlation, of all men's experience, all human capacities for experience, there may not seem, at first glance, to be any very remarkable difference — until we note that the corpus of problems that has occupied philosophers over the past 2000 years has rested upon conception (a), the individual-experience view of knowledge.

From Plato's *Theaetetus* to Ayer's *The Problem of Knowledge* — "Surely I know for certain that these physical objects exist. And if I do know this for certain, I know it on the basis of my (past and present) sense-experiences" (p. 125) — and coming to a focus in the voluminous modern literature on

sense-data, the whole development of Western thought has been based on the unquestioned assumption that what we call knowledge is a *direct* function of an individual's own experience. (The alternative view, that, as a historical growth, knowledge is a *complex* function of *all* individual's experience, has sometimes been glanced at but never systematically worked out.) But, on consideration, it is incorrect to say that the assumption has been unquestioned, because the whole development of Western thought has consisted in a progressive questioning and testing, and final falsification, of this traditional assumption.

Philosophers of a rationalistic tendency, assuming that the individual's own experience was not sufficient to account for the knowledge he possessed, have invoked some sort of super- or supra-experiential form or principle to supplement its deficiencies: Platonic Ideas, Leibnitzean pre-arranged harmony, Spinozan "the order of things the same as the order of ideas".

Those of an empiricist tendency, assuming that the individual's own experience was sufficient to account for the knowledge he possessed, set out to deduce this knowledge, either from experience itself, the unaided experience of an individual, or else from the nature of the self-subsistent object regarded as the cause of the individual's experience.

The empiricist assumed that the individual's experience *was* sufficient to account for knowledge; the rationalist assumed that it was *not*. Both assumed that the only experience the individual had available to him was his own personal and private data, and that it was out of these, either alone or backed up by some extra-experiential element, that knowledge was constituted. It is because the empiricists' undertaking, pursued with a sort of puritanical rigour, has been impossible from the start, that empiricism has proved in the outcome to be the more fruitful account of knowledge.

The rationalist could not account for knowledge, which is essentially a system of common forms, except by an elusive *petitio* in which he borrowed from knowledge the forms in terms of which he was to account for knowledge. The procedure worked as an account of knowledge, but not as accounting *for* knowledge. The empiricist in the long run could not deduce experience from the nature of the known object, because the object progressively revealed itself as essentially a function of experience: the known object was inescapably the object as known. But this left the empiricist with only experience, which he necessarily interpreted as, in fact simply assumed to be, the

experience of an individual here and now. And the question that was implicit in this standpoint was: How was knowledge to be accounted for as a function of the experience of an individual having experience of that which was itself a function of his experience? Hume drew the line under this particular problem without having stated the explicit nature of the problem.

In this extremity, the attempt was naturally made to come to terms with the problem by keeping a foot in both camps, the object-world and the pure-experience world. This is in effect the solution attempted by Kant's great intellectual feat, in which the object became both a thing-in-itself and a function of experience, and knowledge a function of forms which dwelt, not in a Platonic heaven, but in the mind itself.

But the worm at the heart of empiricism was not to be so easily got rid of. The object-in-itself had to go — it could only be known as it was experienced — and only the individual's experience was left; and this proved itself too fragile and uncertain a basis for the complex and rambling structure of human knowledge. This was the merit of phenomenalism, that, as the final logical expression of empiricism, it brought this whole traditional effort of thought, both rationalist and empiricist, with all its great achievements, to a close. A pure rationalism, because of the *petitio* that lurked at its centre, would never have indicated in this way the end of one phase of thought and the beginning of another. For that is what the failure of traditional empiricism forces upon us: a new conception of our relationship as rational beings to ourselves and to that other which we call Reality.

We are not doomed, each one of us, on the basis of our own meagre experiential resources, to lay down our own crazy-pavement of inference from data to knowledge. Thought is much simpler, because so much more complex, than that. We live our lives, and do our thinking, whether as philosophers or as plain men, within an intricate texture of common meanings, the deposit left by all the past ages of human experience. I, as an individual, can know as much as I do because I am able to experience with all men's experiential capacities.

Sartre's tragic and typically twentieth-century cry: "My freedom is anguished at being the unfounded foundation of all value" is its own commentary on the effort to derive the whole of knowledge from the data of an individual's own experience. The effort necessarily fails, because knowledge is not a structure

of that order, and with the failure the individual breaks under the strain of his own heroic presumption.[4]

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that two important questions have been raised in the foregoing discussion which require further elaboration. Reference has been made to the process of abstraction and correlation by which a common world-picture has been constructed from the data of physically and psychically isolated experiential units, from men of all kinds of sensory and affective make-up. The first question is as to how this procedure of abstraction and correlation has been carried out. The second question is as to how the product of this complex procedure, the resulting world-picture, has been made available, as a new and higher form of common experience, to all individual experients. In the first place the common picture is derived *from* the flux of individual experience. In the second place it is referred back, as an organizing principle, *to* the flux of individual experience. These questions require an answer before we have a complete account of knowledge as a function of experience.

North Tamborine, Queensland.

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[4] To anyone who feels himself tragically involved in this predicament this will not seem a satisfactory account of the matter; it will not relieve his sense of being "alone in the cavern of himself, listening to the soundlessness of inflowing fate". It is in fact only half the story. The other half I have sketched in "Philosophical Implications of the Modern Revolution of Thought" (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Sept., 1957), and also in "The Rational and the Real" (*Philosophy of Science*, July, 1957) and "Knowledge and Experience", (*Philosophy of Science*, October, 1957).

DISCUSSION

MR. BRADLEY AND THE LIBERTARIANS
By John King-Farlow

Mr. R. D. Bradley in two recent articles[1] of refreshing clarity and vigour has sought to remove old metaphysical puzzles about 'free will' and 'logical libertarianism' by taking a harder look at misunderstandings and misuses of words. Notably though he succeeds in uncovering confusion in the libertarian ranks, I shall argue that Bradley has still failed to look hard enough; that, when libertarians are purged of the muddles he rightly rejects, their views of freedom and the future may be reformulated in clear and defensible positions.

Bradley's approach to 'free will' can best be evaluated after we have examined his attack on 'logical libertarians'. By the latter title he means those who sympathise with Aristotle's refusal, in *De Interpretatione,* chapter nine, to apply the law of excluded middle to certain future indicative sentences. Bradley's alternative doctrine, 'logical determinism', exposes his own misunderstanding of how variously language can significantly function. According to his doctrine, "for any x and for any $F,$ if F can significantly be predicated of x, Fx must be either true or false". (*Mind,* 1959, p. 193.) Every such $Fx,$ it is held, must obey the laws of identity, non-contradiction and excluded middle. This doctrine can immediately be rejected as mistaken, since many indicative sentences of the subject-predicate form could not, though quite significant, be at all naturally called true or false or self-entailing; nor could they have a contradictory in the formal logician's sense.

What Austin has said of the performative character of indicative sentences like 'I promise . . . ' and 'I baptise . . . ' applies equally to many sentences of subject-predicate form without specific performative verbs. Gromyko might say when a vote is taken: "The Soviet Union is opposed to the admission of Texas and Tasmania to the U.N."; the judge might say: "John Christie, you will be hanged by the neck until dead"; the C.O.'s messenger might shout: "No. 2 Platoon is leaving in five minutes". In each case we can translate these significant predications as Fx, yet these represent not truth-valued propositions

[1] "Free Will: Problem or Pseudo-Problem?", this *Journal,* 1958, pp. 33-45. "Must the Future be what it is going to be?", *Mind,* 1959, pp. 193-208.

but categorically disparate expressions or *acts* of veto, condemnation and command. Thus all that Bradley is entitled to do with the law of excluded middle is to say, as do his libertarian opponents, "if F can significantly be predicated of x then it must be true or be false that 'Fx' must be true or be false". The muddle-headed libertarian like Aristotle tries to justify his opting for "it is false that 'Fx' must be true or be false" by talk about mere potentiality for being true or being false. But the clear-headed libertarian sympathiser like Ryle in *Dilemmas* gives hard-headed reasons for treating descriptions and predictions as categorically disparate, and these reasons Bradley fails to consider.

The real value of Bradley's attack on logical libertarianism lies not in his palpably false alternative doctrine but in his criticism of three dubious presuppositions held by some of his opponents. These are: "(1) that it strictly *makes sense* to talk about statements being true or false 'now' or 'already'; (2) that whenever we say that a statement about the future is true or false we mean that it is true or false now; (3) that if statements about the future were at the present time true or false the future would be unaltered by anything that anyone did, since, as Prior puts it, 'what is the case already has passed out of the realm of alternative possibilities'." (p. 199.)

Bradley exposes the desperate oddness of 'true or false now' in presupposition (1). He justly complains that in (3) — which like (2) depends on (1) — logical determinism has been equated with fatalism by strange talk about the truth of 'Fx tomorrow' *making* Fx happen tomorrow. (pp. 200-05.) Yet Bradley's exposure of confusion among libertarians can be met by reformulation rather than surrender. As for presupposition (1), the weak-headed libertarians say "'Fx tomorrow' is neither true nor false now", but the clearheads should say: "'Fx on Tuesday' cannot appropriately be called 'true' now or 'false' now, on Monday." (The relation of *now* to the punctuation makes all the difference!) (2) becomes for the clearheads: "*If* we may now appropriately say that 'Fx tomorrow' is true or false then we may now say that 'Fx tomorrow' obeys the law of excluded middle." Likewise (3) becomes, not "The truth of 'Fx tomorrow' makes tomorrow's events unalterable", but rather "We could only rightly call 'Fx on Tuesday' a 'true or false statement' now on Monday if 'Fx on Tuesday' were unalterably true or necessarily false".

These reformulations are not muddle-headed, though their originals were. They represent, not mystical descriptions of

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The True and the False, but linguistic proposals for restricting the use of 'true' and 'false' as a subsidiary or partial means of enforcing a metaphysical picture of the universe. If 'metaphysical picture' conveys no apparent sense, take specific examples of pictures to which such proposals would relate. One might instance: Aristotle's contrasting picture of the realm of ἀεὶ ἐνεργοῦντα, about which all futures could rightly be called 'true or false' now, and the realm of moral man as undetermined ἀρχὴ among τὰ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ; Broad's mounting slag-heap view of events and his asymmetry of Space and Time; Kierkegaard's attack on the Hegelian picture of the world from the standpoint of Pure Being — an attack which implies that the spatio-temporal symmetry of quantification theory, urged against opponents by Mr. Bradley as by D. C. Williams and Quine, gives only a misleading God's eye view of man in Time. Williams has claimed that his symmetrical Space-Time merely provides a much needed 'lucent arena', neutral as to metaphysical questions about the openness of the future. However, the libertarian may hard-headedly choose to place his linguistic restriction on future 'truths' precisely because he wants his linguistic forms and conceptual scheme even for ordinary, non-metaphysical thought to reflect his metaphysic positively rather than to be neutral. There are further conceptual reasons why some libertarians fight especially shy of future 'truths' and cannot share Bradley's optimism about precognition. These I have discussed elsewhere.[2]

Now we may turn to Bradley's comments on 'free will' with a clearer appreciation of where he is likely to succeed and where to fail. He is certainly right to emphasise that "the reason why we must resist the temptation to give a straightforward answer to the free-will question is this: it is primarily not a question about what the facts are but rather about what we are to say of the facts" (*A.J.P.*, 1958, p. 34). He sensibly insists that the question of those who ask "whether anyone is *really* free", to the extent of having absolute "freedom from determination" in certain mental acts of volition, is not a "real" or "genuine" but a "pseudo"-question. For by this he means that no "actual or conceivable empirical evidence would settle it decisively". (p. 36.) He is admirably quick to turn his back on proffered disputes about predictability and quantum mechanics as being questions quite different from that of free will. (p. 37-8.)

2 J. King-Farlow, "Seafights without Tears", *Analysis*, 1958.

But here Bradley's wisdom ends. He takes seriously only two radically opposed answers. Either the free will dispute must be dissolved by linguistic analysis, as Hume saw, since it "arises out of confusions about what certain words mean or . . . what their implications are". (This answer he supports for want of considering any other possibilities than the second, which he rejects.) Or there is the answer of C. A. Campbell, who claims that any serious co-operative person can settle the issue by the non-sensory empirical method of introspection in times of moral temptation; for "here", says Campbell, "the self is revealed to itself as a being capable of transcending its own 'formed character' . . . " (p. 39). Campbell holds in his following reply that Bradley has misunderstood him (46 ff.) ; even if this answer is fair, surely our hopes of settling any question by the introspective method are rather dimmed by the wide and widely divergent variety of inner goings on recorded by such inner explorers as Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Bergson, Freud and Sartre. Some of these would call Campbell's appeal superficial and fallacious, others would call it superfluous, since they 'find' that consciousness can behold itself in *all* contexts, with due application, as pure freedom.

If, however, we agree with Bradley against Campbell's claim to introspective verification, we need by no means swallow Bradley's own bitter prescriptions. Although the free-will question is indeed one "about what we are to say of the facts", this does not mean we can always dispose of quarrels over "real freedom" as in all cases being the fruits of verbal muddle. With the muddle-headed, determinists or libertarians, this may be so. But if the libertarian is prepared to take a forthrightly metaphysical stand there is at least one excellent alternative. Bradley, as we saw in the case of his 'logical determinism', and as we see from his offering us only empirical solutions or verbal dissolutions for 'free will', is obsessed with verifiable true or false propositions to the neglect of other significant uses of indicative sentences. The metaphysician can hold that his talk about real freedom is not intended to describe new empirical facts but rather to prescribe how we should look at facts already familiar. Introspective verification of real freedom would be a misconceived endeavour for such a hard-headed libertarian meta-physics, which frankly aims at *getting us to regard* our mental acts in a certain way. Kant's account of Freedom as a regulative, not a constitutive, principle would furnish a good example of how a hard-headed libertarian can begin to reformulate the

muddles Bradley so justly attacks — but Kant blotted his copy-book by speeding on to a moral *proof* of noumenal realms.

Bradley is correct enough in saying that philosophers of free will go beyond the claims of common sense morality and use ordinary words in an odd 'real' sense. But his conclusion that therefore something is ripe for dissolution only points to his somewhat dated notions of significance. The growing interest of linguistic philosophers in metaphysical maps, pictures and symbols[3] suggests a way of going beyond Bradley's valuable but unduly pessimistic critique of libertarian problems. We may yet see a respectable alliance between rigour in analysis and traditional speculation.

Stanford University.

DO WE EVER VALIDATE MORAL STATEMENTS? A REJOINDER

By ROBERT HOFFMAN

Mr. Monro informs me that I erred in taking him to have made a general point about all reasoning, since he intended to make only a specific point about moral reasoning. Here, his is of course the authoritative statement. But if he did not wish to make such a point, I nevertheless do, because the distinction between inference rules and moral judgments does not seem to me to obviate argument along the lines I followed.

Let us take the example from Lewis Carroll. What I take Carroll to be saying is this: $((A \ \& \ B)$ and $(A \ \& \ B$ entails $Z))$ together entail Z; but if we formalize this we have:

(I) $A \cdot B \cdot A \cdot B \rightarrow Z : \rightarrow Z$

But what the Tortoise wishes to know is, granting that "A and B" is *true*, how one can prove the *truth* of "Z" if one does not also grant the *truth* of the hypothetical

(II) $A \cdot B \rightarrow Z$

What he wants to say is

(III) "$A \cdot B$" is true and "$A \cdot B \rightarrow Z$" is true; therefore "Z" is true,

and then to detach "Z" and assert it by itself. Achilles begins his "proof" of (III) by stating that the principle by which he detaches it is legitimate. But his statement is only a longer

proposition from which (a) he still cannot detach "Z" and about which (b) the Tortoise can raise the same difficulty he has already raised. Thus, although Achilles sees that (III) is correct, his attempt to meet the Tortoise's demand for its formalization results only in longer and longer propositions from which "Z" still cannot be detached. Hence, as Mr. Monro emphasizes, *modus ponens* is stated as a rule of procedure and not as an axiom.

But Mr. Monro neglects to give sufficient weight to the reason why this is so. What Carroll shows us is that the *assertion* of a proposition cannot be formalized. We may consider an assertion as a statement which represents an opinion actually consciously believed. Now although it is true that (III) is stated as a rule of procedure and not as an axiom, it is important to see that it is so stated because any attempt to *assert* it as a proposition believed involves us in an infinite regress. For, although adoption of a rule to put the sign "|—" before a proposition if that proposition is asserted need not concern us with whether what is asserted is in fact the case, we should be so concerned if the object of our attention were instead the *asserting* of the proposition. In the latter case, criticism would be directed by the Tortoise not at Achilles's view of the relations that obtain within the syntax of a formalized language, but at whether that which he asserts is true or false, i.e., whether his opinion with regard to the truth of the asserted proposition is sound or erroneous.[1]

Thus it is, that rather than burden ourselves with questions about the limits of knowledge by considering the statements of the Tortoise as assertions and, therefore, as epistemic in nature, we regard one of them, namely (III), as a rule of procedure. We then argue, quite rightly, that the justification of a rule of procedure is its systematic convenience and its existential serviceability.

Mr. Monro also points out that we are frequently confronted with people who doubt the soundness of our set of values and whose set of values we doubt, but that "this does not usually happen with induction". But my point does not depend upon its usually happening, nor even upon its happening at all; it depends upon the possibility of such a situation

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[1] H. Jeffreys, *Scientific Inference,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), p. 186; A. N. Whitehead and B. Russell, *Principia Mathematica,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1925), I, 8-9; W. E. Johnson, *Logic* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1921), I, 3-8.

obtaining. As long as Mr. Monro does not deny the possibility of the state of affairs which I propounded, the argument I advanced is sound.

Elmont, New York.

MR. STOVE'S BLUNDERS

By J. W. N. WATKINS

With the wrong-headed aim of defending an inductivist view of empirical confirmation, Mr. D. Stove has, in paras. (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) of his note,[1] ventured some even more wrong-headed criticisms of my criticism of that view.

Para. (*b*) consists of criticism of something I never dreamed of saying since it is inconsistent with what I did say.

This is more or less admitted at the beginning of para. (*c*), the rest of which shows that Mr. Stove just has not understood the force of what he rather peculiarly calls 'the well known paradox of the ravens'. He writes:

> For certainly no one would attempt to falsify "All ravens are black" by observing swans, shoes, etc., but neither would anyone attempt to instantially-confirm it by such observations.

But the 'paradox' arises precisely because swans, shoes, etc., *do* confirm 'All ravens are black' on an instantiation theory of confirmation (since they instantiate the logically equivalent hypothesis, 'Everything is no raven or black'). I am absolutely staggered that at this late date Mr. Stove can still say:

> It should have been obvious that what corresponds to "failure in attempts to falsify" is "success in attempts to instantially-confirm".

It should, on the contrary, have been obvious that, in at least ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, unsuccessful falsification and successful instantiation are *not* equivalent. If I merely wish to *instantiate* 'Everything is no raven or black' I shall have succeeded if I search for, and find, a number of objects which are not ravens or black. But since I can very well search for non-ravens and black things *without* also searching for non-black ravens, my successful instantiation will not be equivalent to an unsuccessful attempt at falsification.

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[1] "Popperian Confirmation and the Paradox of the Ravens", this *Journal*, August, 1959.

In para. (*d*), basing himself on a remark which he attributes to me (it was actually an explicit quotation from Professor W. B. Gallie's *Peirce and Pragmatism* which I had used in a quite different connection), Mr. Stove attributes to me a sort of Labour Theory of confirmation:

> The degree to which an hypothesis is accredited depends on the amount of effort that has been expended upon it.

A little more effort on his part would, I must concede, not have been out of place. He speaks in his title of 'Popperian Confirmation'. Had he consulted the article by Professor K. R. Popper[2] to which I referred, he would have found that on a Popperian theory of confirmation 'the degree to which an hypothesis is accredited' by an observation varies, not with the observer's perspiration, but with: (i) the *improbability* of this observation given existing knowledge *without* the hypothesis in question; and (ii) its *probability* given existing knowledge *plus* the hypothesis. This is an objective measure and has nothing to do with 'the history and psychology of individual scientists'.

None of Mr. Stove's criticisms has any validity whatever.

London School of Economics.

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[2] "Degree of Confirmation", now reprinted as part of Appendix xix of *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London, 1959, p. 395-402.

CRITICAL NOTICE

On Selfhood and Godhood. By C. A. Campbell. (Gifford
Lectures, 1953-4 and 1954-5, at the University of St.
Andrews.) London, Allen & Unwin, 1957. 35s. (U.K.)

Contrary to recent precedent, Professor Campbell has
brought together his two courses of Gifford Lectures in a
single volume. The result is 433 pages of consecutive argument;
a feat for which, in these days of discontinuous snippets, he
deserves our warmest congratulations. Once again, we have
been shown how the Gifford Foundation helps a philosopher
to perform his traditional office of gathering up the threads of
a lifetime and knitting them into an ordered pattern.

The main themes of the book may be stated briefly. In
the first part, Campbell exerts himself to defend the notions
of "self-activity" and "free-will", understood, I am glad to say,
in the obvious and vulgar sense. In the latter, distinguishing
between "rational" and "supra-rational" Theism, he finds the
former rationally indefensible, and is cautiously prepared to
endorse the latter, relying heavily for this purpose on F. H.
Bradley's conception of a supra-relational Absolute.

It is part of the author's contention that "it is impossible
to discuss the deeper problems of religion save on the basis
of a carefully considered theory about the essential nature of
the human self" (Preface, p. xi); and it is this conviction
which should form the link between the two courses of lectures.
As the link, unfortunately, turns out not to be as close as was
anticipated, a few preliminary observations on "selfhood" and
"Godhood" may perhaps be in order; and it will be convenient
to connect them with Campbell's lifelong interest in the work
of F. H. Bradley.

In general, it is by no means obvious that a philosopher
solicitous of doing justice to religion should emphasize "self-
activity" as Campbell does; and free-will understood as Campbell
understands it is quite incompatible with some widely accepted
religious assumptions. In many Eastern religions the first duty
of man is to seek to be absorbed or annihilated. Even within
the Semitic-Western tradition, the separateness of souls has
been denied (by Averroes, for example, when he asserted the
"unicity of the active intellect"); and even among those who
have asserted the separateness of souls, it has usually been held
to be irreligious to defend free-will: not only among orthodox

Moslems and sectarian Calvinists, but also, by implication, among middle-of-the-road theologians who carelessly allow themselves to use the noble adjective "Pelagian" as a term of abuse. It cannot therefore be said that without "self-activity" and "free-will" there can be no "religious consciousness". At the same time it can be argued that a religion which accepts and dedicates the personal qualities is better, as religion, than one which rejects and tries to discard them. Much of Campbell's early argument is to this effect, and it is greatly to be welcomed.

But the defence of this thesis, and consequently the adjust-ment of the two lecture courses, is embarrassed by Campbell's frequent resort to F. H. Bradley. For even Hume and the Hinayana Buddhists have dealt no more destructively with the notion of "self" than did Bradley in the famous chapters ix and x of *Appearance and Reality;* and as for free-will, it does not even appear in the index to that work, though it is referred to (in a foot-note, p. 435) as a "lingering chimaera", which "no writer who respects himself can be called on any longer to take seriously". It is clear that in the first series of lectures Campbell is taking up a position which his main witness in the second series of lectures would have regarded both as wrong in itself and inconsistent with their common philosophical premisses. There thus arises a certain uneasiness lest the two lecture-courses should fail to coalesce. How far that uneasiness is justified can only be discovered by a study of the detail.

It is not proposed to discuss the first set of lectures at great length; not because what is said there is not important, but because the reviewer is so thoroughly in agreement that there is little left for him to do but to applaud from the grand-stand. To maintain at least the relative unity of the subject in relation to its objects; to insist that the unity of the subject cannot be translated into the unity of an object; to defend the evidence of introspection as the way in which we are aware of ourselves as subjects; to vindicate the notion of "self-activity", or as I have been accustomed to put it, initiative, against resolution into a jostle of separate mental and/or physical events; to state the case for free-will without ambi-guity or compromise; and to show that the "experience of selfhood in its moral mode" is altogether different from the experience of emotional compulsions or concealed imperatives: all these are endeavours which are as pertinent as they are uncommon, and they will warm the cockles of any honest reactionary's heart. Studied in detail, they will do more good to head and heart than anything published on the subject for

a long time. After a dismal period of apologizing to strange gods in outlandish idioms, the soul has once again assumed the offensive.

Leaving the general discussion of these themes, then, to the "progressives", who, on past form, should have plenty to say, I propose to make only three brief and particular observations, and then to pass on. The first is that Campbell's argument is interwoven with idealist reminiscences which are not essential to it, and could deter non-idealists, needlessly, from accepting it. He holds (p. 39) that the centrality of judgment in human cognition, and the centrality of self-consciousness in human experience generally, are at any rate the most persuasive considerations in defence of personal identity. But those who believe that knowledge is in the end awareness know how hard and continuously one has to work to achieve that awareness, and those who believe that the self is disclosed primarily in the cognisance of objects are just as well placed to argue for its permanence and integrity as those who find it necessary to duplicate consciousness into self-consciousness. The argument can, but need not be, conducted on Idealist lines : it is not the Idealism which is crucial, but the incidental emphasis, which not all Idealists share, on moral effort and freedom of will.

This leads to the second observation. Campbell asserts that moral praise and blame stands or falls with "the categorical proposition that X could have acted otherwise because — not if — he had chosen otherwise" (p. 164). The reviewer notes his obduracy with peculiar satisfaction, and recalls with pleasure that he and Campbell independently delivered inaugural lectures in defence of the vulgarest possible conception of free-will, longer ago than either may care to remember. In particular, he welcomes the distinction between the self as forming and the self as formed (p. 177) and the use that is made of it to outflank the fashionable contention that an act which does not flow from a man's formed character does not flow freely. Indeed one might go further, and say that the act of forming his character is just as much a continuation of the character of a moral agent as the character which has been formed. Thus expressed, the libertarian doctrine can admit and appropriate the objection that free decisions cannot come from nowhere.

The third observation is a short one. It is that Campbell does not waste time trying to demonstrate that the problem of free will is not a pseudo-problem. Not only has he already dealt with this issue at length (*Mind*, 1952), but it should be a point

of policy in a straight work on metaphysics to barge ahead without stopping to brush flies off one's back. It is time to turn and swat them if they really sting.

The rest of this review is concerned with Campbell's account of religion; and this, as indicated above, is more debatable. The central question is whether the defence of religion by way of free will is consistent with the defence of religion by way of Bradley. It is only in the last chapter, however, that the vital role to be played by Bradley is fully disclosed; and there are earlier themes which invite examination. Campbell moves back to Bradley over a series of failures; and if we find that in the assay of religion Bradley is a false friend, we shall want to be sure that the alternatives are really failures.

The first point comes out already in the "Prolegomena", where it is stoutly affirmed (p. 32) that "the only faith that is fitting in a rational being is a faith that is buttressed by reason". "The task remains for reason to discriminate, with the highest measure of probability that the case allows, between the authentic and the spurious among the ostensible revelations" (p. 22). Elsewhere, less happily, but more than once, he asks, "Is religion true?" (pp. 5, 421). It could be asked whether "being true" is all that men expect from religion; certainly there are codes and ceremonies, to say nothing of the central activity of worship, to which "true" and "false" are not the appropriate terms to apply. But no religion is wholly separable from its beliefs, and to these "true" and "false" are certainly appropriate. It is, then, entirely proper that religion, at this focal point of belief, should be made the subject of rational investigation. The move to claim exemption for it, though it fits very well with the recent attempts of philosophers to destroy their own credentials, is one which metaphysicians like Campbell (and his reviewer) are surely required to clamp down on.

At the same time, metaphysical statement is not a *substitute* for religious belief. Religious belief is always expressed in particular and historical terms: e.g., "The word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us". Metaphysical statement, on the other hand, is highly generalized and necessarily oblivious of specific affections. No amount of metaphysics could *produce* religious belief, if it was not, so to speak, there already. On the other hand all religious belief assumes a metaphysical alignment. "The word was made flesh" is incompatible (*a*) with simple materialism and (*b*) with *a priori* mind-matter dualism. And at that point two policies are feasible. We can either say "The

word was made flesh, and therefore materialism and dualism are metaphysical mistakes"; or we can say (after full metaphysical discussion) "Materialism and dualism are metaphysical mistakes, therefore we are entitled to say 'the word was made flesh'". The average believer, if he faces the issue, is inclined to take the first road. The metaphysician, however, with some reluctance if he is also a believer, just has to take the second.

On this issue Campbell is firmly on the rationalist side. He has no doubt that faith *needs* to be "buttressed" by reason, and he is not at all prepared to accept revelation *as* a reason. The philosopher, therefore, has a vital part to play in the defence of Christianity, and he can play it properly only if, *qua* philosopher, he is uncommitted. He is like the private detective who undertakes a case with the words "I accept it on the understanding that you want the truth, whatever it may be". This is not to say that philosophy *is* religion at a higher level, in the manner of Hegel, *and of Bradley;* but it is to say that religion *needs* philosophy.

The second phase of Campbell's argument concerns the concept of religion. As he notes, there are many religions; and it is most unsatisfactory to reduce any of them to what is common to all of them, for what produces in various cults the peculiarly religious attitude of worship is not always what is common to all of them, and most frequently what is peculiar to each of them. He starts, soundly enough, with the attitude of worship, and proceeds to say that "religion involves belief in the existence of a being of supposedly worshipful character" (p. 237): i.e., of one endowed with transcendent worth and transcendent power (p. 245). But he notes that in the so-called "apotropaic" religions, which are mainly concerned with the devout placation of devils, there is an overwhelming sense of power and little sense of worth, and these he calls, bluntly, bad religions. This means that there must be a standard for religions, and not merely an average, i.e. they are to be measured by their best. It is along these lines that he works forwards from religion to theism: "Theism is not just one species of religion amongst others, but rather the proper culmination of the development that is intrinsic to religion as such" (p. 255). The sense of worship can be attached only to that which is, at least supposedly, perfect: and this is a criterion which only the traditional attributes, viz., unity, eternity and, in some sense, omnipotence, are able to satisfy. It is to be noted in passing, in the interests of what follows, that at a crucial point in the discussion (p. 264), Campbell swings with

apparent indifference between "imperfect" and "self-contra-dictory", i.e. between religious considerations and Idealist-logical considerations. For the moment, however, the conclusion is that "the logical nisus of the religious consciousness presses forward to a theistic consummation" (p. 268).

The third and most distinctive phase of the argument concerns the sense in which the traditional attributes of God are to be understood. Are we to take them literally or symbolically?

It is important to be clear just what this question means. It could be intended just to ward off the popular misconceptions caricatured in Blake's Old Nobodaddy, which no reflective theologian has taken seriously. Or it could be by way of insisting that when God is said to walk in the garden in the cool of the evening, He does it very differently from a commuting stock-broker; which, again, no reflective theologian would dream of denying. But Campbell carries it much further than that. What he attacks as "literal" is what he calls "rational theism", which asserts in God the attributes of power, wisdom and goodness as "identical in principle with those qualities as we know them in human experience" (p. 270). The difficult words are the words "in principle". It would be generally agreed that attributes such as power, wisdom and goodness are not applicable univocally to God and man. But the danger is that in reaction against "literalism" they may become so attenuated as to stand for nothing at all except human desires and aspirations. This was the ground for the condemnation of "symbolism" in the Encyclical *Pascendi* in 1907.

The difficulties Campbell has in mind are illustrated in the classical notions of "divine intellect" and "divine will". Both intellect and will, as ordinary human qualities, are necessarily imperfect, and therefore not only self-contradictory, but unquali-fied to accept the tribute of worship. But this is not merely because they are human: it is because they are will and intellect. *Any* will, *any* intellect, must necessarily be imperfect, because it is of the nature of both to seek completion in something other than themselves. This is as true of "totalistic" thinking as it is of discursive thinking; as true of the unchanging will revealed in natural law as of the will directed to objectives varying from day to day. "No conation without imperfection": and, as judgment, intellect is (though Campbell does not get round to saying so) a kind of conation. Thus will and intellect are intrinsically imperfect, and cannot be properly attributed to God, the object of worship.

It must here be said plainly : if this is true, then the only conclusion is an utter agnosticism. There is *no* feature of the known world which can give us *any* inkling of the divine nature. We can only, if we will, go on worshipping we know not what. Campbell's own conclusion is less radical : "Either symbolic theology or no theology at all" (p. 323). But how can there be symbols when, by hypothesis, no symbol will serve ? If what Campbell says in chapter xv is true, the foundations for a Symbolic theology are taken away. It is true that later he replaces them, stone by stone, till they take on a quite impressive air : but that is because he surreptitiously goes back on chapter xv. This will be argued later ; our concern here, on the assumption that the unqualified acceptance of chapter xv would wreck the whole enterprise, is to save the enterprise by introducing qualifications.

If we ask *why* thought and will cannot belong to a perfect being the answer is just that they do not terminate in themselves but lead on to something else. This might be an objection if what it led on to were not a further excellence ; but in the advance from excellence to excellence, where is the imperfection ? Obviously, in the advance : what acquires a new excellence cannot have been absolutely excellent before it acquired it. Here at last is the problem ; as so often, it is a problem about time.

The whole theological tradition, descending from Plato and Aristotle, and effectively smothering the Christian witness to the contrary, it that the perfect must be perfect once for all. On the assumption that things are getting worse (i.e., on the Greek pagan assumption) this conviction is understandable ; but if we hold in any sense at all to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, if we believe, with the pastor who said Godspeed to the Pilgrim Fathers, that "the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His word", we must also frame a picture of God as passing in time from perfection to perfection, being at all times perfect, perfect now and perfect then, but perfect then and now in relation to the world then and now. So conceived, God is not transcendent immobility, but transcendent activity, moving in time as its master, perfect at each successive moment, but not, in the old phrase, *simul et semel*. And in this there is no derogation of perfection : never to lapse from perfection in all possible time is just as good as having no time to lapse in. Indeed, from the point of view of worship, it is very much better : for the God who can neither think nor will, impassive and unresponsive, incapable of dialogue and inaccessible to prayer, does not answer the requirement that the object

of religion should be worshipful, and the frostbound negatives which clamp Him in are not honorific, but genuinely privations.

In this case Campbell allows himself to follow the tradition too closely. He takes for granted the timelessness of the one God — missing, as I think, what Bradley comprehended, that the one God who is truly timeless ceases to be God and becomes merely One. He never questions the dogma of eternity. It is doubtless not his business to reflect that the conception of "everlastingness" is more Biblical, but it is his business to meet the objection that it embodies a rival and, from the religious standpoint, a preferable view of perfection. For, if the objection were valid, "thought" and "will" would no longer be as inapposite in their application to God as, following Bradley and the Neoplatonists, he too easily assumes.

So far we have been trying to save "rational theism" from "supra-rationalist" criticism. We have now to show that, if this is not done, the "supra-rationalist" theism to which Campbell concludes cannot even get started. We shall proceed by watching the stages of his argument, and we shall find that he gets through only by borrowing back from the estate which he has repudiated.

The first stage of the argument is that supra-rationalist theism is congenial to the religious consciousness. To this end he cites Otto, and with great effect. The "numinous" is not a rational category, and in all religion there is an element of mystery. So much the most rationalist of "rational theists" will readily admit, and if Campbell thinks otherwise, he is belabouring a man of straw. But Otto insists that between the numinous and the world there is a certain continuity. This comes out particularly in his description of the religious response — after all, it is the phenomenology of religion, and not primarily theology, which is the subject of his study. Unlike the more downright opponents of rational religion who have called Otto into their service,[1] Campbell is alive to this feature of Otto's thinking. "The numinous emotions . . . have their counterparts in ordinary life, and we can recognize the analogy between them, but in their numinous context the emotions are raised, as it were, to a new dimension" (p. 331). But, in that case, the numinous (or supra-rational) is in some respects (admittedly not in others) *similar* to the "counterparts", and the human attributes of thought and will do not need to be discarded, but

[1] e.g., T. McPherson in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. Flew and MacIntyre.

rather to be sublimated, in the divine mystery. It is thus that Campbell proceeds to his "symbolic" theology. He is entirely justified in so doing; we should merely wish to remind him that to that end he must resume something of what he has discarded.[2]

The second stage of the argument is that "supra-rational theism is valid[3] as the theoretical expression of religion" (p. 360). To establish this point, Campbell has to face the difficulty of how to say anything at all about what, being beyond reason, is strictly unsayable. He meets it by means of a symbolic theory of religious truth which is clearly the pivot of his whole theory. The "rational concepts" which are not applicable to God "in their literal significance" are applicable "when understood not as literal portrayals, but as appropriate symbols of the Divine Nature" (p. 345). Applied to the problems of chapter xv, this would presumably mean that to speak of God as mind or will is more "appropriate" than to speak of Him as nescience or automatism; and it is tempting to ask why. Such temptations, however, must be resisted till we have inquired what Campbell means by a symbol. We shall see that he escapes the difficulty and prepares for a further advance by means of an unwitting retraction.

Symbols may be either conventional or natural. The characters attributed to God are not conventional; i.e., they are not the product of a common agreement. Therefore they are natural; i.e., the symbol is suggested by something in that which is to be symbolized. Again, symbols are either arbitrary or analogical; and the characters attributed to God are not arbitrary, i.e., they could not be changed at will, like the Arabic 10 and the Roman X. They are therefore analogical; i.e., there is something in common, as well as something different, between the symbol and that which is to be symbolized. Indeed, Campbell is especially concerned to clear the symbol of any trace of subjectivity: "In order to be able to accept it as a valid symbol of God, religion would rightly insist that its identity (sic) with

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[2] Much of the trouble, I think, is due to Campbell's equation of "rational theism" with "literal theism" (e.g. p. 340 "rational theism which applies its predicates to God in their literal meaning"). And this raises the question, who *are* the rational theists? Surely not the orthodox theologians, who talk, like Hume's Demea, about "adorable mysteriousness", nor the scholastic philosophers, who claim to prove *that* God is but not to know *what* He is, nor the writers of the Gospels, with their penchant for parable, nor yet the mystics, who report, "I have seen", but know that language cannot encompass what they have seen. There are left only those who mistake poetical characterization for literal description: and it is hard to see why these should be called "rational".

[3] "Valid", he adds, "in the sense that we have in it the logical *terminus ad quem* of reflection upon the object of religious experience and its implications".

God be shown to be not a subjective identity . . . but an identity that is in some intelligible sense *objective* or *necessary*."[1] Admittedly at this stage he is discussing the proper "theoretical expression of religion" (p. 360), and not the question, which he holds in reserve, "Is religion true?". But, even so, the word "analogical" strongly suggests the Thomist "analogy of being": and in insisting that the characters of God are not merely attributed to Him but are in reality in respect of His infinite being what the same characters in us are in respect of our finite being, he is siding with the realist tendencies in Thomism against the agnostic.[2]

But to suppose the matter to be thus settled would be to under-estimate the capacity of Idealists for turning things into their opposites. The propriety of the symbol, after all, is determined "by the very constitution of the human mind", not "subjectively", of course, "by anyone's personal choice or private history", but by the human mind as such. This determination Campbell calls "objective", and it appears to be the only meaning that "objective" has for him. The attributes of God are *imputed,* then, *by us,* to a being in Himself unknown.[3] At the best we are taken back to the "analogy of attribution", with its leaning to a sanctified agnosticism; at the worst, God is merely a magnifying mirror for the "inward necessity" of man. And such a view is offered as a "theoretical expression of religion"! It is sufficient answer that no believer would touch it.

It is possible, however, that this diversion of the religious consciousness into Idealism may be overcome in a higher synthesis: with Idealists, one never knows. We must therefore proceed to the third stage of the argument, in which Campbell develops a view of the "general nature of ultimate reality" (p. 383) and tries to show how it "corresponds" (p. 404) to his account of what is theoretically required in religion.

We need not loiter over Campbell's metaphysical vistas: they are, and are acknowledged to be, substantially F. H.

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[1] p. 353: the italics are author's; the interpolated "sic" is the reviewer's, and expresses his surprise.

[2] In Appendix D. Campbell notes the famous distinction between the analogy of attribution and the analogy of proportionality, as conveniently presented to him in the writings of Dr. E. L. Mascall. He is there concerned to argue *ad hominem* that the doctrine of analogy, even in the latter and less agnostic form, is at least as agnostic as his own doctrine of Symbolism. As he observes, the matter requires detailed discussion which cannot be undertaken in an appendix. But neo-scholastic discussions of this sort of problem are *the* standard discussions, and should not be left to an appendix.

[3] cf. p. 402: "The religious mind is impelled to interpret its object *symbolically* in terms of the highest conceivable power and value; and because this affinity has nothing subjective or arbitrary about it, but is based on 'an inward necessity of the mind' this symbolism . . . has objective validity as symbolism." cf. also p. 432.

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Bradley's; with the supra-relational features of the model set in relief, and the distinction between the Absolute and the relational universe of discourse sharply enforced. What we have specially to note is how the factors thus distinguished stand to one another, as they might well provide a paradigm for the relation between a God of religion and the phenomenal world. The relation is that thought, carried to its limit, condemns its own separateness from its object, and that the criteria by which it works can be satisfied only if that separateness is transcended. Now in this instance the notion of system is common to thought and to reality, and while it is as thought that we are directly acquainted with it, it is displayed pre-eminently just at the point at which we cannot follow it. In this way, discursive thought pre-figures the supra-rational whole, and the supra-rational whole is properly symbolized by concepts drawn from discursive thought.

Here we are asked to note (p. 403) a "highly significant parallel" between "the religious view of the ultimate reality it calls God", and "the philosophical view of ultimate reality". Both proceed by the symbolic description of being through attributes drawn from human experience, concerning the propriety of which we know only that they are imputed not arbitrarily, but according to "an inward necessity of the mind". The parallel certainly has its interest, and, if pressed, should provide at least an Idealist-type correction of a too agnostic interpretation of religious knowledge. But the question which continues to worry us is whether it is really a parallel. To compare religious knowledge with philosophical knowledge as things independent is consistent neither with religion, which claims supremacy, nor with Bradley's Idealism, which also claims supremacy, nor with Campbell's own contribution, which alternates oddly between religion and Bradley, but nowhere suggests a division of territory. On the whole, his view is Bradley's: religion is the next best thing to metaphysics, and the appropriate metaphor is not "parallel" but "pyramid". Given the conception of metaphysics which Campbell shares with Bradley, only Bradley's conclusion is in fact logically admissible. In his peroration, however (421) Campbell contends that "straight metaphysical thinking" (as opposed, presumably, to the search for the presuppositions of religion) "leads independently to belief in an eternal being who is the sole ultimate reality". The incriminating indefinite article gives the full sanction of philosophy to what Bradley would have regarded as the weakness of religion, that its God is not *the* One, but *a* One who

is master of the many. The change might well be thought an improvement if it had been intentional: but it is slipped in so casually that one can only suppose that the author does not see the importance of a distinction which is nevertheless highly relevant to his whole position.

Let us now attempt to evaluate Campbell's answer to his own question, "Is religion true?".

(1) He is clearly right in insisting on the intellectual component of religion; and he is further right in insisting that anyone who makes assertions has to be ready to support them by reasons.

(2) He is justified in raising the problem of symbolism in religion, and his refutation of crude literalism in discourse on deity is effective. But, as he himself points out, there are appropriate and inappropriate symbols, and unless there is some knowledge of God, as opposed to knowledge of ideas about God, it is impossible to determine which is which. If knowledge of God were *only* symbolic it could not even be *symbolic*.

(3) Bradley's metaphysic culminates in a concept of the Absolute which is distantly analogous to discursive thought and can be reached only by discursive thought as it discovers its own limitations. In the case of religious concepts, Campbell is inclined to be more exacting; he does not, for example, present the concepts of divine reason and divine will as stepping-stones to understanding, but even as obstacles. We have seen that a symbolic theory can be judged adequate or inadequate only if we already know at least what it is trying to symbolize. From that point of view, the analogy of Bradley's metaphysics is instructive. But most instructive of all, perhaps, is Campbell's own observation on propositions affirming the metaphysical concepts of unity, infinity and eternity. On p. 406 he writes: "What I suggest is that these propositions are literally true in respect of what they deny, but only symbolically true in respect of what they affirm." The same could be said of propositions referring to the mind and will of God; and, once this is admitted, there is no need to turn one's back on these concepts in order to provide an intellectual explanation of religion. Indeed, they might even prove to be the best possible symbols, not only for the religious, but also for the philosophical consciousness, and in that case, by holding them firmly in place, we might save religion from the cannibal distinction of being swallowed by philosophy. To discuss these issues would, unfortunately, take us too far afield.

In the course of a detailed review of a thesis with which he is not wholly in sympathy, it is difficult for the reviewer

not to look more of a caviller than he feels. There is in fact much to admire: the firm emphasis on freedom and decision; the tough-minded (perhaps too tough-minded) debunking of the so-called "problem of evil"; the invigorating avoidance through-out of anything approaching sentimentality; and, above all, the strongly marked personal imprint which leaves nothing except Bradley quite as it found it. For all these qualities, and for many others, the work is important reading, particularly for those of us who will not at any price let either philosophy or religion go. But it must be added that at least one of those so situated finds Campbell's accommodation disappointing; all the more so as he is convinced that, if Campbell's original pro-gramme had been adhered to, the cause of the disappointment would never have arisen.

He set out with the firm conviction that a clarification and defence of the notion of "self" was essential to a philosophy of religion. While admitting that there are religions which play down the "self" as thoroughly as Bradley does, I cannot but agree with Campbell that they do not provide the proper scope and encouragement for a positive morality, and therefore find them inadequate expressions of a man's whole being. But, just when the affirmations of the first series promised a strongly personalist approach to religion, and thereafter to philosophy, an excessive reaction against popular anthropomorphism and an increasing dependence on Bradley prevents him from attempting it. The personal characteristics of God are reduced to symbolic representations of we know not what, and the most that Campbell will say for them is that they are less misleading than their opposites. It may be argued that on the "phenomenal" level there is room for the free will which is gathered up with all its uniqueness of flavour into the absolute: but, if so, it is a low-level phenomenon, and it cannot be in any sense an attribute of God. Bradley denies it *in toto* and I believe Bradley is consistent. It is noteworthy that the traditional attributes Campbell is most eager to reinstate are those of unity, infinity and eternity (e.g., p. 405): exactly those which most completely remove deity from humanity. And to the end (p. 411) those which he is least prepared to concede are thought and will. It is evident that Campbell's God resembles his Absolute at least in this: that he is objective system at the expense of personal being. It is unfortunate that he prefers Bradley to his own intimations of freedom. It is certain that he cannot have both. It seems a lot to ask, but it would be fascinating to see him start again, unimpeded, from his own intimations of freedom.

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REVIEWS

My Philosophy and Other Essays on the Moral and
Political Problems of our Time. By B. Croce. London:
G. Allen & Unwin, 1949. 240 p. 15s. (U.K.)

The essays in this collection (selected by R. Klibansky and
translated by E. F. Carritt) are not all dated, but, of those
which are dated, most are from the 40's and the general impres-
sion is of work of Croce's later years, though following the
main lines of his earlier work. Croce, of course, considered that
philosophy could be worked out only in connection with concrete
problems of the major departments of human culture; never-
theless, the presentation of separate essays on questions of
history, politics, ethics and aesthetics gives an effect of dis-
connectedness and incomplete development of points and throws
into relief the *weaknesses* of his doctrines.

The first essay, "My Philosophy", shows that what repelled
Croce in Hegel's dialectic was what it had of formal rigour,
and the decision, to which he found himself forced, to replace
Hegel's idea of a "final system" by the idea "of a provisional
dynamic system constantly developing and of provisional and
dynamic systematisation" (p. 20) is a playing fast and loose
with the notion of "system" or of philosophy. This is borne
out in what is said in the note (p. 224) on "The Final Philo-
sophy", a conception which is rejected because any philosophy
is a step in the historical development of philosophy. "No doubt
there is something 'final' or 'perennial' in all philosophies, but
it is not strictly their philosophy, rather it is the unchanging
subject-matter of all philosophies. This is self-consciousness,
which is only active in the perpetual posing and solution of
particular problems, an activity it could not perform if it were
not essentially one and unchanging in its fundamental and
eternal categories." It is impossible, nevertheless, "to pick out
these categories and to establish them above, and in abstraction
from, the particular philosophical context with which they are
not so much combined as fused . . . . Every such attempt to
demonstrate and define final concepts reveals, on due analysis,
the historical context which has contributed to its result and
which makes it a determinate philosophical theory *hic et nunc*,
sufficient for the day . . . but not sufficient for the morrow,
when it must be refreshed and reformed." If this means any-

thing it means that what is "perennial" in philosophy (or anything that would enable us to say that this and not that is a philosophical question or is a piece of philosophical work) *cannot be stated*. Either "self-consciousness" is also a concept relative to a historical context and no more fitted than any other to provide a permanent subject-matter or it is bereft of content and can never be shown to *generate* concepts or to "fuse" with any set of particular problems. What the translator, drawing on Bradley, renders (p. 15) as "a wearisome 'ballet of bloodless categories'" is just what gives positive character to Hegel's doctrine (gives something that could remain as the object of philosophical theory even if the empty "self-consciousness", supposed to generate it, were dropped), and, when Croce excises this, he can (cf. p. 227) call anything or anyone (even "very unpretending people" who have no formal theory) "philosophical" — but neither "getting clear ideas" nor being "in the possession of the substantial truths" gives us any clear or substantial notion of what it signifies.

The same emptiness is seen on the moral side (in the essay entitled "The Identity of Philosophy and the Moral Life") when Croce says that those "who are called eminently men of character feel the inter-connection of all spheres of action, and that they cannot be truly or sincerely virtuous in one unless in all, since all depend on the one principle of conscience" (p. 229). And the same amalgamation of distinct questions is seen in the essay "In Praise of Individuality", when he says that there "is no reality outside the passion which we feel, the truth we know, the act we will; all is rounded within this circle of the spirit". And "true progress is our own progress, the progress of the world in and through us, which is always going on and so is without end. We all feel this progress in every good or useful action, in every new truth, in every experience of beauty; and in feeling it we rejoice that the world is alive and going forward in spite of trouble, ruins or disasters" (p. 206). Leaving aside the conventional and uncritical character of much of this, we might agree that there is a special sense in which all goods are progressive (it is certainly an important question for ethical discussion), but to say so does not in the least imply that everything spiritual (everything "within us") is progressive or again that everything real is spiritual, that we inhabit a "spiritual world". Also, it might be admitted that it is especially from cultural or historical problems that philosophical thinking comes, that it is the "difficulties" of practical life that stimulate our discovery of formal distinctions

and connections — and that it is for this reason that philosophy, treated as one "specialism" among others, is so barren. But this would give no ground for saying of philosophy and history that "the whole of one is the whole of the other", for taking all problems as having a human *content* and not distinguishing from special contents the *forms* which are to be found in human and non-human material alike.

Croce's weakness on the formal side is illustrated in his treatment of classification, which he describes (p. 199) as having an instrumental and not a cognitive value, and takes to be mis-understood by the childish imagination of untrained minds which "ends by giving 'objective reality' to the most elementary classifications" (p. 200), seeing the Greeks as constantly occupied in the creation and admiration of perfectly beautiful statues or poems, the Romans as invariably austere, and so forth; where it is not shown how such classifications can have even instru-mental value if they do not direct attention to certain objective facts, or what is the *formal* distinction between what is called a broad generalisation and what does happen invariably. How-ever, it is not merely that we are left in vagueness on this particular point; the whole conception of "the individual" as the object of knowledge makes it impossible to show that one "universal" rather than another applies to it. A thing's "individuality" is the unspecifiable character which somehow comprehends and accounts for all its specifiable characters; but, in fact, *nothing* is accounted for along this line, and in place of knowledge we have only a welter of impressionism or subjectivism.

These considerations are reinforced by Croce's view of aesthetics. "The vital condition of art's autonomy", he says, "is simply the essential unity of the human spirit which, in its various activities, is never disintegrated so as to let each drift in isolation, but is itself always present as the pilot at the helm" (p. 133). This might be taken as at least an approach to the view that the same formal principles of criticism are operative in any field into which human beings might inquire — being in fact the principles of logic (or "categories"). But for Croce it is part of an attack on formalism and it appears to signify a unity of subject-matter, a treatment of all activities of the human spirit as *directed upon* the human spirit. It is in accordance with this position that Croce assimilates all arts to literature and that he has so notoriously upheld an expressionist aesthetic in which creator, appreciator and work are all run together. But, as with all subjectivists, he has to reinstate the

distinctions on the "subjective" side and then arbitrarily to assert that they all belong to the unity of "self-consciousness". That this, in spite of his professions to the contrary, is not the way to overcome dualism can be seen when he says (p. 150), "Even when our thought studies and criticises the thoughts of others and traces their history, it is not strictly thinking about thought but about the practical activity of thinking, for thought is always the subject which thinks and not what is thought about." The untenability of a *theory* of an uncognised subject confronted with a cognised object is no less clear than its dualistic character.

The distinction and connection of types of cognition (e.g., "logical or ratiocinative" and "sensuous or intuitive") is no more successfully presented; nor does Croce give an at all coherent account of "the two grades of practical activity, the one egoistic or economic, the other universal or moral", which he says are both necessary (to practical activity, presumably) though the second continually subdues and refashions the first. "Since this solution of the problem we no longer think . . . of 'moralising economics', on the contrary we demand that it should assert its own nature yet more strictly, not as immoral but as nonmoral, for that way is its function and its truth. At the same time we demand that the moral conscience should intervene to bring it under its supremacy, for human life is subject to this sole authority, which alone is competent to give the ultimate decision in moral conflicts by prescribing the action which may reconcile them" (pp. 29, 30). It is no solution of the antithesis, if there were one, between the good and the useful to make one the "natural ruler" of the other; this is only to deny the antithesis — but, besides that, Croce cannot establish a department of human life by the relational notion of "usefulness" (of being a means to something), he cannot, if good is qualitative, treat the good and the useful as complementary terms, and he cannot, if the question is of *two* relations (say, being commanded and being demanded), give any reason for taking either as subordinate to the other.

Croce's doctrines of the practical and the beautiful are, of course, familiar enough from earlier and longer writings; the present collection merely exposes them in their theoretical nakedness, not least by its insistence on that "amalgamation" or reconciliation according to which history has to be conceived in terms of "the abiding purposes of humanity", philosophers have to be democrats and anyone who recognises universality in ethics is a Christian (see especially the third essay "Why we

cannot help calling ourselves Christians"). The Greek thinkers, we learn (p. 100), "never gave to the moral consciousness that emphasis and that pre-eminence which it gained from Christianity". But in fact it is pre-eminently in Greek thinkers that we find a disinterestedness and objectivity of outlook that can never be gained from a doctrine of personal salvation, which reaches its "highest" moral level in the notion of *altruism* — a notion still on the level of personal interest. Certainly Croce has here (particularly in the essay on "Justice and Liberty") some quite forceful criticism of modern egalitarianism, but this is counterbalanced by the absence of any real sense of objectivity, which would carry with it the recognition that "universal" does not mean "widespread" and that types of activity (or ways of life) of a distinctive ethical character can never be brought under the notion of "individuality".

To say that in the field of history "even the occasional defeats are the preludes of victories to come and of those advances in human thought and of [in?] civilisation which inexplicably accompany one another and continue from generation to generation" (p. 106) is to take a cheaply optimistic view which might well coalesce with religion but leaves without positive sense that "liberty" which is supposed to unify the historical process. It is a view having much in common with the doctrine of Marx, at whom Croce girds as a subordinator of all human values "to his one ruling interest, economic welfare and the social revolution" — an obviously biased judgment, since, whatever the defects of Marx's view of production, it is not a doctrine of "welfare" in the sense of personal comfort (it would compare more than favourably with Croce's many observations of a philanthropic sort, including the statement on p. 162 that the treasures of Christianity concealed in the religiosity of the Spanish or Neapolitan people "are sufficiently revealed by the cult of the compassionate Madonna") and it gives a more positive character to the conception of liberty than any doctrine of "inwardness" can do.

There is still much to be learned from Croce (as well as from Marx) on history and politics, though in this collection there is little on these subjects which he has not said more forcibly elsewhere. But there is nothing which can patch up the rickety philosophy of spiritual reality or the "circle of the spirit" (Croce's efforts only leave the gaps more glaring) ; the fundamental error is to take any concrete content as characteristic of reality as such. On the one hand, this leads to an evasion of the real problems of "spirit" (of mind and culture)

in the assumption of a metaphysical "sanction" and support for forces which in fact have constantly to work and struggle with *alien* material — and, in setting up a bountiful reality, it is adopting a position no less "materialist" than those it attacks. On the other hand, in substituting for questions of *form* questions of "matter" or concrete content, or in amalgamating the two, it is cutting at the root of exact and detached (or "objective") thinking. Thus, while it may be conceded that Croce has opened up a number of philosophical questions, the general conclusion remains that in his anti-formalism he is antiphilosophical.

JOHN ANDERSON.

G. E. MOORE: A CRITICAL EXPOSITION. By Alan R. White. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1958. 226 p. 25s. (U.K.)

Mr. White's book, against its author's intentions, presents a curiously diminished Moore. The emphasis is on Moore's 'method', and Moore's reduction in size is due partly to this emphasis and partly to the absence of any historical setting to his work. (The book has a final chapter entitled 'The Historical Setting'; it deals with Moore's '18th century predecessors' — Berkeley and Reid — and his '20th century contemporaries'.) We see Moore not as liberating philosophy from the power of Absolute Idealism — two phrases exhaust White's references to Bradley — but as stumbling towards Wittgenstein and Ryle under the great load of his 'concept theory of meaning', his entitative universals.

Moore 'wrote little about his method . . . because his energies were given to practising it. For this reason and because I think that it is as a contribution to the right method of tackling philosophical problems that his work will have lasting importance, I give pride of place in my treatment to this method. Thus I attribute more importance to his 1900 article on "Necessity" than to the famous "The Refutation of Idealism" of 1903' (pp. 1-2). White quotes Moore's denial of 'a preference for any method', but maintains that this denial is compatible with his assertion that the search for analysis is Moore's characteristic 'way of doing philosophy' (p. 2). And he brings the article on Necessity into prominence because it contains so clear and so early a statement of Moore's pre-occupation with analysis. It shows that 'Moore's interest is not in finding either the truth or the meaning, in the sense of correct use, of what we say,

but in finding the meaning, in another sense, of that about whose truth and meaning, in the first sense, there is no doubt' (p. 4). White does not suggest that this is Moore's only philosophical interest. His long discussion of the double meaning of Moore's question 'What does it mean to say so-and-so?' includes references to Moore's efforts to get at the meaning (in the 'ordinary sense') of *philosophers'* statements in order to get at their truth.

Moore's search for analysis is less significantly called his method than the method of his search. How do we come to know the meaning (in the 'analytic sense') of something whose meaning (in the 'ordinary sense') we already know? White has assembled with meticulous care the materials Moore provided for an answer. For Moore it is a matter of being able 'to say what it is that we *see before our minds* when we see the meaning of an expression, that is, the notion conveyed by it — with perhaps the hint that what we see is the property common to all those things in regard to which the expression is correctly used; or being able to say what are the elements, the constituent concepts, into which the notion or concept can be *divided* and which, as it were, compose it; or being able to say how the given notion is related to and *distinguished* from other notions which are conveyed either by the same or by different expressions' (p. 66). White stresses in each case the 'being able to say'.

The view that analysis is a matter of inspection is Moore's 'basic view', and the one most closely connected with his hypostatization of concepts, and the one, in White's opinion, most radically mistaken — you don't advance towards an analysis by peering hard at something hard to see (pp. 66-72). When Moore talks about analysis, at least when he talks about it under that name, he talks about division; "his practice largely consists in the work of analytic distinction" (with inspection playing a subordinate role); so that, as far as analysis is concerned, he is related by his words 'to Russell, the Vienna Circle, and the early Wittgenstein' and by his work to the later Wittgenstein and to Ryle (pp. 74-75). White is all for the 'distinction' view of analysis; besides its other virtues, it is prophylactic against Moore's obsession with 'translation' and synonymity.

The discussion of Moore's opinions on analysis is surrounded by chapters dealing with his opinions on common sense, ethics and perception. White successfully disposes of the too clever interpretations of Moore which identify his defence of

common sense with a defence of ordinary language. The chapter on Moore's handling of the problems of perception is a beautifully lucid and concentrated piece of exposition and criticism. White ends it as an advocate of sense-data, but not as Moore's advocate. ('I have tried to show that there are sense-data, but that they are not what Moore thought they were', p. 190.) The question 'What do you see?' has two types of answer. 'A penny' answers it and so does 'Something brown and elliptical', but quite differently. The first answer identifies what the second describes. Sense-data language is descriptive, material-object language identificatory. On the basis of the distinction between identification and description White builds up a theory of sense-data which is worth the attention it cannot have in this brief review of his whole book. There is one thing which anybody who gives it his attention will have to consider, and that is how far White means by sense-data what other philosophers have meant. 'For "visual sense-datum" is only a generic word for whatever gives a description answer to the question "What do you see?"' (p. 189).

S. A. GRAVE.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Mention in this list neither precludes nor guarantees later review.)

Bowes, Pratima. The concept of morality. London, Allen and Unwin, 1959. 220 p. 21s. (U.K.)
A defence of objectivism against such moral theories as those of Stevenson, Hare, Nowell-Smith and others.

Cleobury, F. H. Christian rationalism and philosophical analysis. London, James Clarke, 1959. 162 p. 15s. (U.K.)
A defence of theology in terms of linguistic analysis.

Goussinsky, B. Continuity and number. Tel Aviv, the Author, 1959. 31 p. 50c. (Paper covers.)

Grene, Marjorie. Introduction to existentialism. Chicago University Press, 1959. vii, 150 p. 10s. 6d. (U.K.) Paper covers.
First published in 1948 as *Dreadful Freedom.*

Johnstone, Henry W., Jr. Philosophy and argument. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1959. 141 p. $4.
It is hard to see how a fundamental philosophical thesis can ever be disproved, since nothing could count as evidence against it. Never-theless, philosophical arguments have more than merely persuasive force, and can be valid or invalid, though a valid philosophical argument is always, in a sense, an *argumentum ad hominem.*

Lewis, H. D. Our experience of God. (Muirhead Library of Philo-sophy.) London, Allen and Unwin, 1959. 301 p. 30s. (U.K.)
Discusses the meaning and justification of religious assertions, from the point of view of one concerned "at the spread of religious indiffer-ence and the secularism which springs largely from despair . . . of being religious without sacrifice of intellectual integrity".

Melden, A. I. Rights and right conduct. Oxford, Blackwell, 1959. 87 p. 20s. 9d. (Australian). Paper covers.
"My ultimate objective . . . is to invite attention to relatively neglected issues in moral philosophy . . . My immediate objective is to explore some of the so-called foundations of certain familiar moral rights" such as the right of a parent to special consideration from his child.

Moore, G. E. Philosophical papers. (Muirhead Library of Philosophy.) London, Allen and Unwin, 1959. 325 p. 30s. (U.K.)
Eleven papers, written between 1923 and 1955. Two ("Certainty" and "Four Forms of Scepticism") have not been previously published.

Runes, Dagobert D. A dictionary of thought from my writings and my evenings. New York, Philosophical Library, 1959. 152 p. $5.

Russell, Bertrand. My philosophical development. London, Allen and Unwin, 1959. 279 p. 18s. (U.K.)
A new book, *not* a collection of already published writings (except for a final chapter containing four polemical articles on contemporary Oxford philosophy), this is a complete philosophical autobiography,

starting from Russell's early Hegelian period and including two chapters on *Principia Mathematica* and a discussion of "The Impact of Wittgenstein". It ends with an Essay by Alan Wood on the development of Russell's philosophy, which would have been the Introduction to a new technical study of Russell's work, had the author lived to complete it.

SANGHARAKSHITA, Bhikshu. A survey of Buddhism. 2nd edition. Bangalore, Indian Institute of World Culture, 1959. viii, 527 p. 27s. (U.K.)

ULLMANN, Richard K. Between God and history: the human situation exemplified in Quaker thought and practice. London, Allen and Unwin, 1959. 212 p. 21s. (U.K.)

WEBSTER, T. B. L. Greek art and literature, 700-530 BC: the beginnings of modern civilization. (de Carle lectures, University of Otago, 1959.) Dunedin, Otago University Press and Melbourne University Press, 1959. xviii, 125 p. 25s. (Australian). Paper covers.

WILSON, N. L. The concept of language. University of Toronto Press, 1959. viii, 153 p. Price not given.
A serious attempt to treat a language as a system of rules raises the question: What is a language? "There exist no general working definitions for semantics comparable to Peano's working definitions for arithmetic." This book sets out to provide them, and to define such terms as "true", "logically true", "designates". The author concludes that "the world has a certain structure and in one way or another it imposes this structure on languages". A fairly advanced knowledge of symbolic logic is presupposed.

YARNOLD, G. D. The spiritual crisis of the scientific age. London, Allen and Unwin, 1959. 207 p. 18s. (U.K.)
"Scientific explanation, 'from below', must be supplemented by something far wider and deeper, interpretation 'from above' . . . Western civilization above all things needs to recover its hold upon the Christian verities." Foreword.

NOTES AND NEWS

AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHILOSOPHY:
ANNUAL CONGRESS, 1959.

The Congress and Annual General Meeting for 1959 were held in Adelaide from August 21st to August 26th. The following papers were read:

Friday, 21st August: Presidential Address: Professor A. C. Fox — "Another Look at the Concrete Universal".

Saturday, 22nd August: Professor J. Passmore — "The Infinite Regress Argument".

Mr. R. S. Walters — "The Problem of Counter-factuals".

Sunday, 23rd August: Dr. A. C. Jackson — "Intentional Action".

Mr. B. Ellis — "Measurement".

Monday, 24th August: Mr. J. E. McGechie — "Implication and Intention".

Mr. D. H. Monro — "Universalisability".

Tuesday, 25th August: Professor J. Mackie — "Equality of Times".

SCARCE ISSUES OF THE *JOURNAL*

The sale of complete sets of the *Journal* is a principal source of the Association's income. Members who can supply to the Secretary any of the issues listed below either as a gift or in return for payment would prevent the imminent drying-up of this source:

Vol. III, No. 1; Vol. XI, No. 1; Vol. XIV, No. 1; Vol. XXII, No. 3; Vol. XXII, Nos. 1-3 (bound together); Vol. XXX, No. 1.

I should like to acknowledge with thanks receipt of gifts of rare issues to the Association recently from: Mr. Nicholls, Mr. Rose and Mr. Roxon of the University of Sydney; Mr. Bradley and Mr. Walters of the University of New South Wales; Professor Kyle and Dr. Dowling of the University of Queensland; and Mr. J. C. Begg of Dunedin, New Zealand.

D. C. STOVE,
Hon. General Secretary.

1960 INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR LOGIC, METHODOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

An International Congress for Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science will be held at Stanford University, Stanford, California, U.S.A., from August 24 to September 2, 1960, under the auspices of the *International Union for History and Philosophy of Science*.

Information about membership fees and other details of the Congress may be obtained by writing to Professor Patrick Suppes, Serra House, Stanford University, Stanford, California, U.S.A.

FULBRIGHT TRAVEL GRANTS

Applications for travel grants are invited from Australian students and scholars planning to undertake study, research or lecturing at American institutions of higher learning during the American academic year 1960-61.

The awards will meet the cost of fares to and from the United States but applicants will be required to secure their own dollar funds and university admission.

For further information and application forms write to the

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PHILOSOPHY

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Edited by H. B. ACTON

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